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ONLY ANOTHER WAY STATION:

Status Allocation in Electronic Networks of Practice

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ABSTRACT

The organizational literature concerning status has focused on its consequences more than its antecedents; moreover, the research that has addressed status origins has drawn its evidence from traditional face-to-face organizations, featuring task-focused and/or enduring groups. The present research addresses both of these literature gaps by examining how individuals in global, distributed, electronic networks of practice allocate status in a legitimate hierarchy. Taking as its context one of the first of these organizations – the SAP Community Network – this dissertation employed the DELPHI Method, AllOurIdeas.org, and panel data to leverage a research design that kept distinct status antecedents and outcomes, and yielded five distinct contributions to knowledge. First, it identified an unambiguous, unified structure of status – providing powerful clarification against its cognate constructs. Second, it challenged the attenuation principle of Status Characteristics Theory by suggesting that additional, similar status information does not contribute less to status allocation. Third, it indicated that the factors which effect status allocation differ depending on the level of status being determined; moreover, status establishment might function differently than either status maintenance or status enhancement. Fourth, the present research revealed that to the extent that status characteristics affect status allocation, they do so through the mechanism of performance; in other words, organizational culture can downgrade ascription and engage performance during status allocation. Fifth, the present findings challenge the argument for perpetual returns to initial high status – i.e., the Mertonian Matthew Effect – but do support Merton’s Phenomenon of the 41st Chair. Managerial practice must now recognize how organizational structure and culture can influence status allocation, which has implications for the strategic use of multiple routes to status in the achievement of organizational goals. Through focusing on a new, yet prevalent organizational form, the present research significantly advanced status theory in organizations.

ASQ Keywords: Status; Network Forms; Expertise; Gender; Motivation

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“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” - John Fitzgerald Kennedy

DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the Ph.D. degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case, the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I consider the work submitted to be a complete thesis fit for examination.

I confirm that my thesis was copy edited for conventions of language, spelling, and grammar by Yann S. Eves-Hollis and Erica A. Scott-Pacheco.

If a degree is awarded, I authorise that an electronic copy of my thesis will be deposited in LSE Theses Online held by the British Library of Political and Economic Science and that, except as provided for in Regulation 41, it will be made available for public reference.

I authorise the School to supply a copy of the abstract of my thesis for inclusion in any published list of theses offered for higher degrees in British universities, or in any supplement thereto, or for consultation in any central file of abstracts of such theses.

I declare that my thesis consists of 45,525 words.

Signed: 

"The first duty of a man is the seeking after and the investigation of truth." - Cicero

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CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.” - Aristotle

1.1 PHENOMENON OF INTEREST

“Organisations” derive their name from their propensity to provide structure to a group of labourers whose output serves a common goal. This structure most often takes the form of a hierarchy, a ranking of its individuals according to criteria whereby the individual of the lowest rank has less of the criterion than does the individual ranked immediately higher than he or she. An individual’s position on this ordered ladder relative to others’ positions is one’s status. Hereafter, status is defined as an individual’s rank with respect to his or her peers’ in the particular social hierarchy. Given that status is a structural position that derives from non-structural antecedents, it is important to understand the social judgment – i.e., the allocation – of status in organisations.

A fundamental social judgment is the decision to defer to another individual. Deference includes “recognition, respect, esteem, endorsement, commendation, approval, liking, honour, and support” (Bothner, Podolny, & Smith, 2011, p. 441). According to Bonacich (1987), individuals “determine each actor’s status as a function of the deference received from the n-1 others in the system – a conception that closely accords with a network-theoretic conceptualisation of status as a ‘stock’ built up from ‘flows’ of deference (Podolny & Phillips, 1996)” (Bothner et al., 2011, p. 441). Status gain is a reward, “a form of social currency that groups give to members who contribute to the group’s success,” (Anderson, Srivasta, Beer, Spataro, & Chatman, 2006, p. 1096). However, theorists to date have neither provided a calculus for how

these individual characteristics come together to total an individual's position in a hierarchy, nor included measures of one's performance (cf. Bunderson & Barton, 2011). The present research will address both.

Hierarchies emerge even from explicitly designed “flat” organisations. One reason that status systems in organisations are so pervasive is that hierarchies answer a fundamental problem in labour economics: how to motivate individuals to work. Individual cooperation in groups is motivated by contributing to both individual (Hirsch, 1976) and collective utility. The first solution that status provides is increased access to (often scant) and often asymmetric control over (i.e., power) resources that can be employed for goal achievement and its associated successes and benefits, including information (Hagstrom, 1965), influence (Taylor, 1987), and pecuniary rewards (Podolny, 2005).

The second solution that status provides is increased personal rewards. In nearly all organisations (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002), individuals expect to be rewarded for effort (Vroom, 1964); by definition, a reward is a “desired object or event made conditional on having fulfilled some criterion (Kohn, 1999)” (Fahey, Vasconcelos, & Ellis, 2007, p. 188). Beyond material gains, rewards can take many forms, including intellectual rewards (e.g., learning, problem-solving, autonomy), social rewards (e.g., recognition, professional identity) (Boudreau & Lakhani, 2009), and positive social value (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, pp. 31-32), which is “all those material and symbolic things for which people strive ... [including] political authority and power, good and plentiful food, splendid homes, the best available healthcare, wealth, and high social status.” Beyond material compensations, increased status can act as an extra reward for the same effort. This explains why status-striving is a universal motive (Hogan & Hogan, 1991; Wright, 1994). Indeed, “status seeking [striving] is seen as a primary

motive for pursuing money, status objects, education, certain occupations, and membership in elite voluntary associations,” (Pearce & Xu, 2010, p. 2).

The motivation literature is saturated with strategies for matching incentives to both tasks and employees. However, Gamification (cf. McGonigal, 2011) is a new management trend that leverages the animal predisposition for play to employ game mechanics and design elements in order to increase engagement, to promote desirable behaviour, and to expedite the achievement of mastery – all elements demonstrated to be associated with successful performance. Game mechanics in organisations motivates individuals continuously through an engagement process that progressively makes levels of achievement more difficult to attain. As above, these rewards can be social, material, and/or psychological incentives – and the most powerful of which is status (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972). Moreover, the unpredictability of these rewards encourages individuals to seek status gains, and even more so to avoid status losses (Cohen & Silver, 1989; Ridgeway, 1982; Troyer & Younts, 1997). Some research (cf. Lazear & Rosen, 1981) indicates that the avoidance of status loss is a stronger motivator than is achievement of a status gain, suggesting that status tournaments might be a special case of Prospect Theory (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974, 1979, 1981). Management techniques that leverage effective reputation and status systems (Wu, 2011b) can extract from employees a full range of “good citizen” behaviours including extra-role behaviour (Katz & Kahn, 1978) and prosocial behaviour (Feinberg, Willer, Stellar, & Keltner, 2012).

Traditionally, organisations have determined employee remuneration through a combination of absolute value per unit given (e.g., hours worked) and/or produced (e.g., piece-rate textiles manufacturing), and discretionary value (e.g., quarterly target bonus). However, if increased status is to function as a reward, then there must be a

universally-understood grammar of status allocation in order to delineate which behaviours lead to status gains and what types of individuals deserve (McLeod, 2008) greater status in the hierarchy; without this rational calculus, individuals deem the incentive random and thus demotivating. Status theory lacks a clear explanation of how antecedents combine to allocate status, and the present research will endeavour to provide one.

Information about status antecedents and the grammar of the status hierarchy may be neither available, nor complete, nor reliable. This is the case in new ways of working (e.g., task-distributed, non-face-to-face, asynchronous, cross-functional groups and teams) and in new organisational forms (e.g., open innovation co-creation partnerships, firm-sponsored user-communities), when even the current understanding of status conferral in organisations requires revision (Bitektine, 2011; Morrison, 2010).

The present research aims to address these gaps in the management literature through an examination of the antecedents of status in a new type of organisation – the electronic network of practice (ENoP). The establishment and use of electronic networks of practice is noteworthy because research and development within organisations traditionally has relied on small, co-located groups and teams in order to generate innovations (West, 2002). However, the advent of information & communication technology (ICT) created a break with the “same-place, same-time” restrictions on groups.

Electronic networks of practice now facilitate effective remote teamwork. ICT-enabled collectives can collaborate as richly as do brick-and-mortar teams. An electronic network of practice is an exemplary ICT-enabled organisation that unites individuals both within a common occupational function or professional discipline, as well as across existing boundaries such as co-location (Wasko, Teigland, & Faraj, 2009).

Electronic networks of practice exist at the intersection of face-to-face communities of practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and online communities (Ganley & Lampe, 2009; Preece, 2000). These electronic networks of practice add to our understanding of work groups because they are much larger in size, are composed through self-selection, are governed through generalized exchange (Bearman, 1997), and are held together by the strength of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). Moreover, electronic networks of practice are ongoing, real-life, non-face-to-face groups with complex tasks and constituent contributions that are evaluated – making their majority-online existence the only difference to traditional work groups that do indeed collaborate online.

Indeed, electronic networks of practice “promote deep relationships, allow fast organisation, improve the creation and synthesis of knowledge, and permit better filtering of information,” (Kane, Fichman, Gallagher, & Glaser, 2009, p. 46). These communities often act as innomediaries (Sawhney & Prandelli, 2005) between “seekers” and “solvers” (Lakhani, 2008) so that the organisation can “confidently and purposefully leverage [ICTs] for specific business objectives,” (Yolton, 2011). Unlike social networks that connect and coordinate individuals without professional purposes, electronic networks of practice facilitate rapid, effective networking, sharing ideas, entertainment, collaboration, and problem-solving among professional members, who form new relationships that benefit their businesses in order to “exchange ideas, conduct commerce, solve problems, entertain themselves and collaborate far more effectively than ever before ... form relationships, which in turn create new revenue and marketing opportunities for all parties concerned,” (Fahey et al., 2007, p. 190).

Although the majority of electronic networks of practice extend beyond a single firm’s employees, no limitations in the definition of an electronic network of

practice dictate that one could not exist within a firm's ecosystem. Indeed, if the modern firm is "The Networked Organization" (Watson, 1990), then we would expect an electronic network of practice to serve as an exemplary case context for studying contemporary organisations.

Addressing that gap in the literature requires a real-world setting that operates different systems recognising status, quality, reputation, and performance. The present research examined such a context in a new organisational form: the electronic network of practice. This environment is ideal to examine antecedents of status allocation because it features high specialisation and high uncertainty as the situational norm (Akerlof, 1970). Upon the absence of confident performance information (such as reputation) in traditional organisations, individuals rely on social status cues as a signal of quality to make judgements about expertise for efficient task-division and decision-making (cf. Pearce, 2011b). However, an ambiguous situation (e.g., novel work, blurry firm boundaries, limited face-to-face interaction) fosters uncertainty about an individual, including one's status position; some research argues that such uncertainty causes individuals to use only fixed indicators in their judgment of social status, leading to reduced group performance (Bunderson & Barton, 2011).

The virtual nature of an electronic network of practice adds an element of situational ambiguity that "makes social status an important anchor of perceptions and evaluations. The attainment and defence of status is both more important and more complex in these ambiguous and shifting environments" than in traditional settings (Pearce, 2011a, pp. 12-13). Moreover, status literature must address how organisational actors would allocate status in uncertain conditions and thus establish the order that formal status hierarchies provide (Pearce, 2011b).

Therefore, electronic networks of practice are excellent contexts in which to continue this theoretical development; these online communities represent the modern organisational reality of status allocation in an uncontrolled environment. Moreover, such research can supplement the extant literature that is limited by its heavy reliance on lab studies conducted with *ad hoc* groups rather than sampling from existing and/or enduring groups and teams. Scholars lament this “empirical emphasis on relatively settled fields where culture, status, and practice are well aligned and mutually constitutive [(Bourdieu, 1979; Podolny, 1993)],” (Wry, Lounsbury, & Greenwood, 2011p. 155) and call for new research that examines online environments and electronically-mediated social cognition and influence because extant research is “wholly situated in face-to-face interaction,” (Pearce, 2011b, p. 337). The present research accepts this challenge to examine status allocation in a context where uncertainty and ambiguity are the norm and not the exception. Status hierarchies are in constant flux, yet ascribed characteristics are fixed, and achieved characteristics change too slowly. Therefore, this dissertation makes the novel suggestion of performance as an antecedent to status and, more specifically, as a mediator of the effect of traditional status indicators on status.

The present research examined the construction of status hierarchies. As described above, a status hierarchy is a rank-ordering of individuals according to their capital of a desirable trait. This organising emerges because of its three main functions. The first function of the status hierarchy is as a league table for trustworthiness as a member of the indirect reciprocity community acts to solve the social dilemma of creating and tending the collective good (i.e., the knowledge repository). Individuals contribute to and withdraw from this bank of information according to the principle of generalized exchange (Ekeh, 1974; Sahlins, 1972).

High rank in a status hierarchy due to a reputation for reciprocity in generalized exchange (Gouldner, 1960) functions because of its signalling of global trustworthiness. Signalling is a collection of behaviours that convey information regarding the target's abilities, intentions, competencies, and perceived expected contributions (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Spence, 1974). These behaviours identify the target as a trustworthy transaction partner who either possesses or can access valuable goods; this distinction can be statistical or taste-based (Waguespack & Simcoe, 2010). Signalling is particularly important under conditions of uncertainty – i.e., the “structural or situational potential for nonreciprocity” (Molm, Collett, & Schaefer, 2007a) – and ambiguity (Podolny, 1993; Podolny, 2005), when search costs are high. Individuals always have incomplete availability of information (March & Simon, 1958) and act as is most efficient for their cognitive economy (Rosch, 1978); in other words, individuals have a low psychological tolerance for uncertainty (Kruglanski, 2001). A status hierarchy facilitates the efficient identification of experts (Bunderson, 2003b) and thus becomes a “key mechanism for mitigating risk, reducing uncertainties, and increasing trust,” (Paolucci, Eymann, Jager, & Sabater-Mir, 2009, p. 14). Signalling is the second function of the status hierarchy.

The endeavouring for status girds the community against the problems of shirking and free-riding (Tadelis, 1999) and thereby sustains cooperation and peer production (Sakamoto, Sadlon, & Nickerson, 2010). The relationship between reputation and the status hierarchy it produces functions in both directions: individuals who either challenge or subvert the prevailing group norms and hierarchy are punished with the devaluation of their status rank (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a, 2009b). As detailed above, decreased status is associated with decreased prestige and reduced access to both resources and influence. Thus, the withdrawal of the desirable status rewards acts as a sanction available as a governance mechanism (Hahn, Fley, Florian, Spresny, & Fischer, 2007), “exerting pressure for consistent norms and reciprocity

among individuals within embedded and overlapping relationships (Granovetter, 1992),” (Fleming & Waguespack, 2007, p. 168). This sanctioning is the third function of the status hierarchy.

Just as one individual can be ranked on a status hierarchy higher than another, one type of status can be more valued than another. In order to understand why status formats sort into an ordered hierarchy, it is necessary to determine whether there is consensus among tournament actors as to that ranking. This consensus is crucial because the status system would not function without established legitimacy of total subscription – analogous to a power hierarchy not functioning without the establishment of legitimate authority. Previous research focuses on consensus-building in teams but not in other large, diverse, distributed organisational forms such as online professional communities. The first contribution of the present research is to examine to what extent organisational forms other than small work groups exhibit consensus regarding the status hierarchy. This contribution was realised through an asynchronous focus group and a survey.

Once the consensus regarding the status hierarchy is established, it is then possible to examine the basis on which honorifics are allocated to individuals – that is, how individuals are sorted onto a status hierarchy and according to what grammar. This is the second contribution of the present research. First, the present research primarily investigated to what extent status was awarded based on who an individual was (i.e., one’s ascribed and achieved characteristics) or for what an individual did (i.e., performance). This juxtaposition is important because if personal descriptors were stronger determinants of status, then the tournament for status is not subject to manipulation. In contrast, if status can be created actively by the individual instead of allocated by the system, then the status grammar must be recalibrated to reflect the

values intended, not the values of competition. Unlike most extant research, the present study uncoupled performance from indicators of achievement to thereby examine the role of performance in status construction. This approach is a valuable theoretical clarification that separates league tables, competitive motives, and the literature concerning performance from the phenomenon of a non-performance rank-ordering – that is, a status hierarchy.

Second, this dissertation considers whether status characteristics contribute independently or work in tandem, after distinguishing performance rankings from status orderings and clarifying the function of performance in calculating status. In other words, the present investigation will consider whether the effect of separate characteristics is unified within their taxonomical category (e.g., ascribed characteristics), or whether the whole is more or less than the sum of its constituent parts. Solving this puzzle would yield a distinct contribution to knowledge because existing literature is conflicted regarding this point. Some research (Berger et al., 1972; Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977; Humphreys & Berger, 1981) argues that each piece of status information contributes to overall status independently, and moreover that subsequent confirmatory information has less explanatory power (i.e., status is subject to the principle of attenuation). However, other research (Berger & Fisek, 2006; Ravlin & Thomas, 2005) contends that status information can be divided into a dichotomy (e.g., diffuse-versus-specific, sticky-versus-mobile, ascribed-versus-achieved) – indicating that an additional calculus must occur within a cluster in order to address instances of status inconsistency (wherein the values of status data conflict) (Berger, Norman, Balkwell, & Smith, 1992; Sampson, 1963). Third, the present research seeks to resolve this tension, which is important for the establishment of status theory within the organisational literature.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The present research endeavours to address the following families of research questions:

RQ0: What is the function of a status hierarchy?

RQ1: Is there a status structure? What is it? Who makes the rules and why?

RQ2: How is status allocated?

RQ3: Is status allocation different at different levels of the hierarchy?

1.3 SCOPE & STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

1.3.1 Scope

The present research will focus on an exploration of part of the nomological network status – specifically, the antecedents of status allocation. It is important to develop a clear understanding of the composition of status in order to connect to the established literature on its consequences; however, the present research conceives of status as the outcome of a process and is not concerned with its consequences.

Anything can be ranked on any specified criterion – sports teams (cumulative success), wines (batch quality), and organisations (market performance) included. Such hierarchies typically order by degree of quality that is specific to that scale but also universally understood. However, a status hierarchy of individuals avoids good/bad judgment and instead reports a social comparison of prestige deservingness. In addition, as status is a property of an individual and allocated to that target by alters, the present research will remain at the individual level of analysis. Connections to other related research will be discussed in Chapter 6.

1.3.2 *Structure*

This thesis will adopt the following structure. First, Chapter 2 will survey the literature traditions concerning both status theory and electronic networks of practice, as well as make the case for their integration. Chapter 3 will detail the multiple methods used for data collection as well as data processing and analyses. Next, Chapter 4 will address the first two research objectives (i.e., RQ0 and RQ1) through the DELPHI Method and the AllOurIdeas.org survey. Then, Chapter 5 will examine the latter two research objectives through regression analyses of panel data. Finally, Chapter 6 will discuss the boundary conditions for the present findings and will outline potential extensions to both theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

“Play gently with ideas.” - Oscar Wilde

2.1 THEORETICAL CONTEXT: MOTIVATION THEORY

In order to determine how status is allocated to individuals within an organization, it is crucial to understand where the status literature fits within the discipline of organizational behaviour. One pillar of that management scholarship foundation is motivation (Greenberg & Baron, 2010), of which status is a source.

Schwartz (1992) delineated 10 universal motivations: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. The traditional extrinsic and intrinsic dichotomy further separates financial and non-monetary tangible rewards, recognition, obligation, competition, and opportunities for advancement from self-generating and self-perpetuating drives, such as interest or enjoyment, (need) satisfaction, enrichment, and challenge (Amabile, 1988; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2002), extrinsic rewards include forces non-inherent to the task, while intrinsic rewards satisfy the needs for competence (i.e., efficacy; (White, 1959)), autonomy (i.e., control; (Deci, 1975)), and relatedness (i.e., belonging; (Baumeister & Leary, 1995)). Research consensus subscribes to the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as outlined in Amabile et al.'s (1994) Work Preference Inventory. There, intrinsic motivation encompasses self-determination (choice, autonomy), competence (mastery, challenge), task involvement (task absorption and flow), curiosity (complexity), and interest (enjoyment, fun); extrinsic motivations include evaluation, recognition, competition, tangible (e.g., financial) incentives, and others' commands.

Lakhani and Wolf (2005) expanded these motivations into three dimensions: enjoyment-based intrinsic, obligation/community-based intrinsic, and extrinsic.

Education research (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Harackiewicz, 1979; Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b) has argued that extrinsic rewards dilute intrinsic motivations for learning, a situation that Frey (Frey, 1997; Frey & Jegen, 2001; Osterloh & Frey, 2000)) theorises as “motivation crowding”. In the context of online communities, Cook (2008) cautions that competition for financial compensation can undermine the *communitas* ethos and trust within the community. However, evidence from the psychology of creativity (Amabile et al., 1994; Csikzentmihalyi, 1990) and from goal-setting theory (Epstein & Harackiewicz, 1992; Manderlink & Harackiewicz, 1984) demonstrates that this “crowding out” is either reduced or disappears upon consideration of goal immediacy, competitive/cooperative environment, competence valuation, feedback effects, and individual difference variables (e.g., achievement orientation). Indeed, some evidence indicates that extrinsic and intrinsic motivations can have an additive effect (e.g., Hennessey & Zbikowski, 1993), boosting each other and subsequent output in a virtuous circle. Further evidence demonstrates that extrinsic and intrinsic motivations have differential impacts on task performance, task engagement, and task enjoyment (Cameron & Pierce, 1994). Boudreau and Lakhani (2009) sorted the types of motivations by organisational structure:

Figure 1: Motivation and Organisational Structure (Boudreau & Lakhani, 2009)

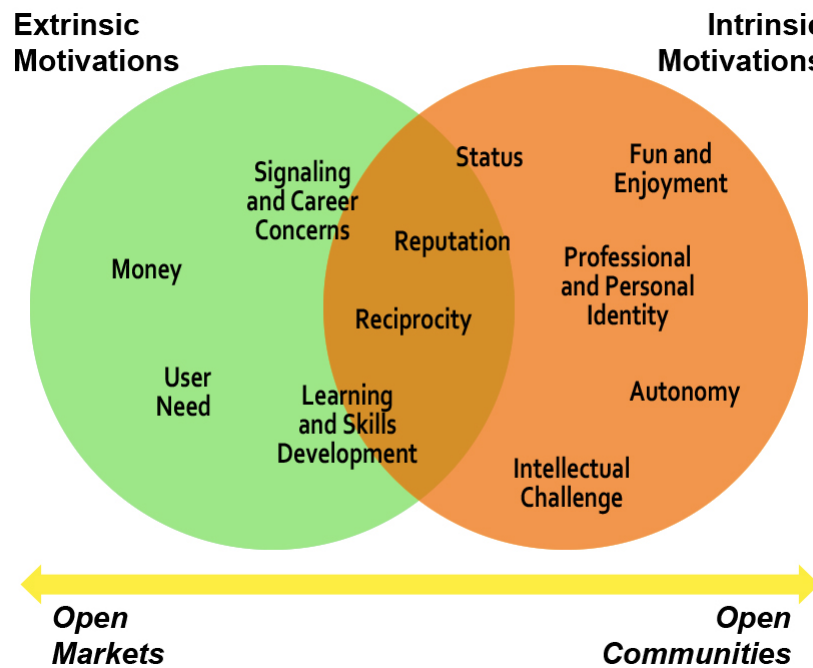


Figure 1 (above) reveals that one of the strongest motivators of success in organizations that have properties of both markets and communities is status. Section 2.2 will continue to explain the consequences, core construct, and fundamental assumptions of status before Section 2.3 provides its partial nomological network.

2.2 STATUS THEORY

2.2.1 *Consequences of Status: Influence*

Given that the consequences of status occupy a significant portion of the literature and garner most of the “so what” practical attention, it is important to contemplate these considerations in order to properly situate theories of status allocation in a wider context.

Unlike the status literature that has occupied a margin in organisational behaviour research, “social influence research has been, and remains, the defining hallmark of social psychology,” (Crano, 2000, p. 68). Status is closely related to influence (Wry et al., 2011, p. 155), but the two constructs are not synonymous. The distinction is demonstrated through research evidence that inter-individual performance expectations – and particularly the expectation of expertise – strongly mediate the relationship between status cues and influence (Berger et al., 1972; Berger et al., 1977; Driskell & Mullen, 1990; Littlepage, Schmidt, Whisler, & Frost, 1995). Bunderson (2003b, p. 583) found no evidence to support the argument that status cues effect intragroup influence beyond perceived expertise. Additional research evidence supports the claim that achieved status (and not ascribed status; Thomas-Hunt & Phillips, 2011) and the perception of expertise (and not actual expertise) yield influence (Horai, Naccari, & Fattoullah, 1974; Littlepage & Mueller, 1997; Littlepage et al., 1995; Loyd, Phillips, Whitson, & Thomas-Hunt, 2010; Tedeschi, 1972). The dynamics of status and influence are related to each other and also to the availability of alternative sources of valued resources (Molm, 1987). Therefore, definitions of status that conflate the two (e.g., Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001; Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a) are incorrect, and the present research will not address either influence or other consequences of status.

2.2.2 Status Frameworks

Although status is a core literature in psychology and sociology (Harvey & Consalvi, 1960; Simmel, 1908; Weber, 1922), it is peripheral to the organisational behaviour literature (Pearce, Ramirez, & Branyiczki, 2001). This marginalisation is problematic because “the absence of attention to status can lead to impoverished

[management] theories,” (Pearce, 2011b, p. 333). Given that status has both inherent (Huberman, Loch, & Onculer, 2004) and instrumental value (Pearce, 2011a), an understanding of how status operates in organisations is crucial to advancing status theory in management research.

Status operation consists of three interconnected status components working at different levels, each of which requires proper examination. Lawler et al. (1993) note that the evaluation of status characteristics draws inspiration from the field of structural social psychology to facilitate micro-level and macro-level theory and research (Webster & Hysom, 1998). Hahn et al. (2007) argue that at the micro-analytical level, status is equivalent to image; at the meso-analytical level, status corresponds to esteem (Goldhamer & Shils, 1939); and at the macro-analytical level, status is comparable to prestige (Barnard, 1938; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001).

In addition to levels, other dimensions of status include formal and informal states that correspond to different features of rewards and resources. Formal status equates to position in a rational-legal hierarchy (i.e., formal authority and position power; Mintzberg, 1979), whereas informal status reflects social-psychological sentiments and needs, including popularity and expertise (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958; Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994; Merton, 1957). Subsequently, these rankings organise hierarchies of deference, which in turn determine patterns and flows of influence (Driskell & Mullen, 1990; Emerson, 1962; French & Raven, 1959; Kalkhoff & Thye, 2006). The allocation of status is the conferral of honorifics.

2.2.3 *A Definition of Status*

Status in organisations is not socioeconomic status, which is a position in wider society determined by personal wealth; instead, this status is closer to sociometric status, which is a comparative measure of popularity among peers (Canales, 2012). Status is constitutively defined as an individual's "relative respected social standing [or position] with reference to a particular social grouping or hierarchy" (Pearce et al., 2001, p. 157) whereby high status signifies integrity and deserving of respect, honour, and prestige (Berger et al., 1972; Pearce & Xu, 2010), and low status signifies deficiency of the set of desirable characteristics.

2.2.4 *Assumptions*

The present research makes four basic assumptions about the construct of status. First, each individual has some amount of status. Second, that although status positions are relative in a reciprocal phenomenon, two individuals can have the same status value. Third, it is possible to represent the combination of many qualitative facets as a single, quantitative relative position without claiming to reduce that richness to a single value. Fourth, although any measure of status is a snapshot that captures a single point in a dynamic environment, this measure is nevertheless sufficient to represent the construct of status.

2.3 A PARTIAL NOMOLOGICAL NETWORK OF STATUS

A preliminary nomological network for status in organisations appears at the end of the section, as Figure 2. Although a nomological network is a technique for the establishment of construct validity (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955), in the present research it will serve only as a guide to scope and not as a research model. The specified pattern of interrelationships among the hypothesised antecedents, consequences, and non-causal correlates of the focal construct guided the empirical investigation – and particularly, data collection through alternative methods to surveys such as qualitative participant-observations (Jorgensen, 1989). Following Spreitzer (1995), the below review prepares the foundation for the present research concerning status allocation in organisations.

2.3.1 Status Hierarchies

A social hierarchy is a rank ordering of individuals along one or more socially important dimensions (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Hierarchies are a “human universal” (Anderson et al., 2001; Tilly, 1998), and a “ubiquitous form of human social organization” (Friesen, Kay, Eibach, & Galinsky, 2014); individuals demonstrate a spontaneous and systematic preference for hierarchical differentiation (Bales, Strodtbeck, Mills, & Roseborough, 1951), perhaps because such ordering is easy to process cognitively (Zitek & Tiedens, 2012). The establishment of social hierarchies proceeds even in the absence of a formal hierarchical structure (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Although Anderson and colleagues (2006, p. 1095) defined a status hierarchy as “an orderly division of resources and influence among group members, using such means as allowing or denying different individuals access to resources and the rights to perform certain behaviors”, this definition erroneously conflates rank with both

amount of influence and control over resources. In fact, a status hierarchy simply is a social hierarchy organised by degree of respect and prestige (cf. overview in Webster & Hysom, 1998).

The formation of status hierarchies within groups may be an intrinsic part of organisations (Schein, 1977). Although the meanings of status categories are defined by practices that link the hierarchy to a broader classification structure (Bourdieu, 1979), the resultant status ordering is persistent and stable (Zhou, 2005). Status symbols reinforce this social order (Edelman, 1978), and this differentiation can be functional (Tiedens & Fragale, 2003). As Wry and colleagues (2011, p. 155) explain:

Status enables an ‘effective claim to social esteem in terms of positive or negative privileges’ (Weber, 1978, p. 305). In this way, status distributes esteem, deference, honor, and prestige within a social collective (Berger et al., 1972; Ridgeway, 1991) and, as such, stratifies its members (Knoke & Burt, 1983; Lounsbury, 2002; Podolny, 1993).

2.3.2 *Benefits of Status Hierarchies*

Status hierarchies in organisations clarify work roles and rewards, underscore and legitimise existing coordination mechanisms and hierarchies (de Cremer, 2003), and ensure member accountability for task accomplishment and resource distribution (Overbeck, Correll, & Park, 2005). Individuals’ group-oriented behaviour increases their rank, and individuals with higher rank exhibit more selfless behaviour (Willer, 2009). The shape of a status hierarchy can affect its functioning such that steeper hierarchies with taller, more centralised decision-making and a narrower span of control predict worse attitudes (Anderson & Brown, 2010) overall, including less satisfaction, less motivation, and more turnover inclination (Shaw, 1964).

In addition to group benefits, high rank has value for individuals. As rank in a status hierarchy increases, respect, admiration, autonomy, power, social support, self-esteem, well-being, and (access to) material resources all increase (Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980), while physiological stress decreases (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000; Link & Phelan, 1995; Sapolsky, 2004a, 2004b). Similarly, individuals ranked lower on the status hierarchy behave more passively and less efficaciously, which leads to decreased motivation (Argyris, 1957) as well as lower self-perceived competence and ability (Korman, 1971; Stolte, 1978; van Vugt, 2006).

2.3.3 Tournament Theories

Tournament scenarios (Connelly, Tihanyi, Crook, & Gangloff, 2014) provide the opportunity to raise one's status in a competitive setting attesting to one's added value. Although few zero-sum status hierarchies are sustainable over the long term (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), individuals often "compete" in status tournaments (Orrison, Schotter, & Weigelt, 2004) to gain peer recognition (Bothner et al., 2011). Tournaments primarily occur in contexts that are exploratory (March, 1991) or those with uncertain standards of effort quality (Bothner et al., 2011).

Status tournaments are based on the foundation that status-striving – an inherent social motivation – also is a motivation for work (Vroom, 1964); indeed, motivation to maintain the esteem received from highly productive peers enhances an individual's productivity (Zuckerman, 1967). Yet, status is not exclusively an extrinsic reward, which directly contradicts Bothner et al.'s (2011) presumption that an individual who derives greater meaning (an intrinsic reward) from action seeks less status. Once participating individuals have surpassed some skill threshold (cf. Leifer, 1988), status-strivers in tournaments act to promote aggregate profitability (defined as intangible rewards minus costs), and receive the direct reward of esteem-based status and the indirect reward of shared surplus resources.

2.3.4 *Knowledge Frontiers of Status Hierarchies and Tournaments*

Similarly, the output of high-status actors is valued more highly than is the same output produced by low-status actors (Benjamin & Podolny, 1999) because high-status actors' expertise is unquestioned (Wry et al., 2011). The increased recognition to high reputation actors and subsequent status-enhancement, and the withholding recognition from less reputed actors and subsequent status-suppression is termed The Matthew Effect¹ (Merton, 1968, p. 58). This "rich get richer" phenomenon, which favours cumulative advantage and collective enterprise, has a winnowing effect that Merton (1967) claimed increases alters' engagement, providing a strong incentive to produce. In traditional organisations, this effect means that a target who receives an accolade is more likely to perform highly for the employer and subsequently earn another accolade, the cumulative effect of which is to inspire the target's peers to "catch up" – thereby also contributing to organisational success.

However, a central tenet of Exchange Theory (Homans, 1961) holds that individuals who are low in "X" (for example, status) place a higher value on each additional unit of X than do individuals who are already high in X. This argument would suggest that the tournament organiser should enact a "redistributive intervention" for a preserving effect, directing slack resources instead to marginal (and not to elite) actors, which scholars (Bothner et al., 2011; Simcoe & Waguespack, 2011; Waguespack & Simcoe, 2010) have termed The Mark Effect². Status hierarchies can

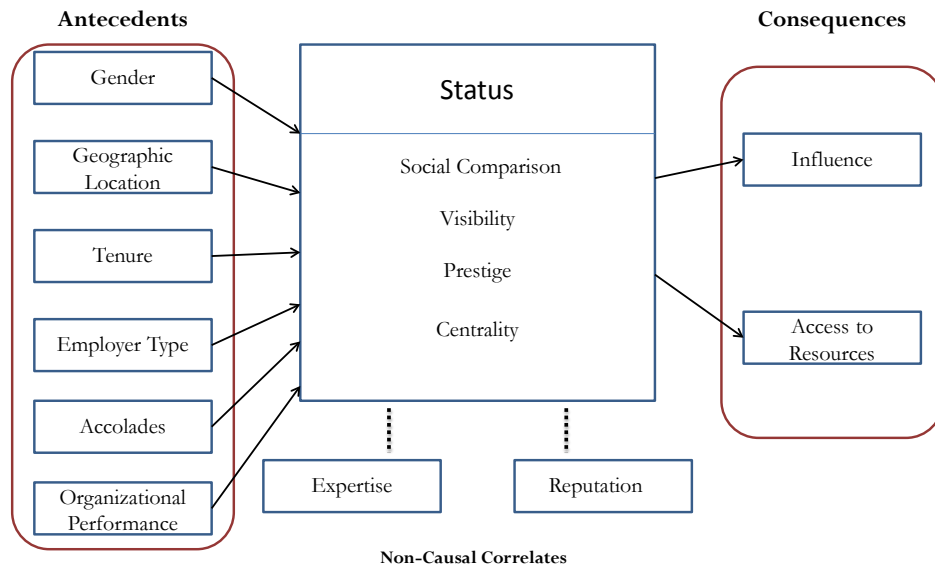
¹ The "Matthew Effect" derives from the "The Parable of the Talents", specifically "For to every one that has shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that has not shall be taken away even that which he has," (Matthew 25:29). Variations also appear as "The Parable of the Pounds" (Luke 19:27), Mark 4:25, and Luke 8:18. All Biblical references follow the *King James Version* (KJV) citation format.

² Mark 10:31 (repeated Luke 13:30), "But many that are first shall be last; and the last first."

have other constraints such as the “ratchet effect” (Merton, 1968), whereby individuals who have obtained a particular degree of status never again fall below the same level; moreover, initial status orderings have persistent effects on subsequent status hierarchies (Cohen & Zhou, 1991). In The Phenomenon of the 41st Chair (Merton, 1968), individuals comparably deserving of recognition may be excluded due to characteristics inherent to the list itself and not to the candidates – for example, having a fixed number of occupants at the highest rank. These phenomena can perpetuate as “oligopolies ... dominate the field and engage in ‘friendly competition’ among themselves rather than follow the dictums of a strictly ‘free market’” for status (Crane, 1976, p. 730). Together, these tendencies of tournament hierarchies led Merton (1968, p. 57) to observe that any form of status was “only another way station”.

The above limitations of extant theories of status and status hierarchies might reflect the inherent tendency of decay found in all measurement systems. The “Performance Paradox” (Meyer & Gupta, 1994) describes the dual nature of incentives, which both drive performance and corrupt a community (Sakamoto et al., 2010, p. 1). Meyer and Gupta (1994)’s observation is based on Campbell’s (1976, p. 3) “corruption of indicators”, which states that an increased reliance on quantitative social indicators for decision-making creates corruption pressures in both the indicator itself and the social process that it monitors. That observation is contemporary to, and perhaps based on Goodhart’s (1975) Law. Beyond passive, this decay can be active when “the power of a broker who controls the flow of information to influence the attribution of [status] can undermine the fundamental mechanics ... inasmuch as attribution is a driving incentive and the basis of status,” (Fleming & Waguespack, 2007, p. 168). Therefore, status tournaments might be subject to “gaming” – i.e., manipulation – by both gatekeepers and players.

Figure 2: Partial Nomological Network of Status in Organisations



2.4 PROPERTIES OF STATUS

2.4.1 *Social Comparison*

The first property of status is social comparison. The social judgment that is status conferral is accomplished through a series of social comparisons. Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) developed from a core assumption that individuals possess a drive (defined as a general and pervasive tendency) to evaluate their opinions and abilities (Kruglanski & Mayseless, 1990). Individuals can be driven to self-evaluate through the motives of self-assessment, self-verification (“validation”; Goethals & Darley, 1977), self-improvement (Wood, 1989), and self-enhancement (Gruder, 1971). Individuals check their relative standing in the group and endeavour to maintain a positive self-evaluation (Tesser & Campbell, 1982).

In The Proxy Model of social comparison (Wheeler, Martin, & Suls, 1997), the individual attempts to gain information in order to estimate one’s likely success at an unfamiliar task, but this comparison process proceeds differently for abilities and for

opinions. Ego's (or "target") evaluation of one's ability is a function of both an experienced alter's (or "proxy") relative standing on specific attributes and whether that proxy exerted maximal effort on some preceding, preliminary task; if this amount of task effort is known, then the attributes become irrelevant. The target's evaluation of one's opinion is a function of the target's similarity with the proxy, the proxy's expertise, and the target's prior agreements with the proxy (Suls, Martin, & Wheeler, 2002). Festinger's original (1954) hypothesis that proxies similar to the target are (more) useful (i.e., desirable) for generating accurate self-evaluations has since been revised: dissimilar comparison others raise target's confidence more than do similar proxies (Goethals, 1976). A consideration of in-group versus out-group standards demonstrates different psychological processes and self-knowledge (Buunk & Mussweiler, 2001). Such an upward social comparison increases an individual's self-evaluation of competence and motivation when a change in status is possible, a process termed "assimilation" (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). The potential revision of status motivates social comparisons, and social comparisons provide information about relative status.

2.4.2 Visibility

The second dimension of status is visibility. According to Berger and colleagues, observable characteristics are invested with social value during the socialisation process (Berger et al., 1972); the primary person-perception characteristics are gender, ethnicity, education, and occupation (Webster & Foschi, 1988). Such characteristics likewise develop associated expectations for individual performance capacities (i.e., "Expectation States Theory"; Berger et al., 1977). An individual's favourable involvement with others (i.e., positive feedback on performance) yields attributed social power (Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Gioia & Sims,

1983), increases the accuracy of the characteristic's perceived performance expectation, and strengthens its perceived value (Berger, Wagner, & Zelditch, 1985). The value of characteristics and their effect on performance exist across a continuum, giving each characteristic a different weight (Berger et al., 1977) and thus enabling sorting of individuals by total prestige (Berger et al., 1980). An individual's amount of prestige relative to others' is one's status (Thye, 2000).

Status Characteristics Theory (SCT) provides the requisite basic framework for the characteristics that members utilise to organise interaction using status characteristics (Bunderson, 2003b). Status Characteristics Theory is a confluence of Status Generalization Theory (Berger et al., 1977) and Expectation States Theory (Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Wagner, 1985). Moreover, Status Characteristics Theory is a situational (i.e., context variable) theory (Cohen & Zhou, 1991) that systematises the signals of expertise in order that individuals can better filter, process, and act on information (Cyert & March, 1963; Kruglanski, 2001; March & Simon, 1958; Rosch, 1978). Status information leads to more successful decision-making with fewer errors, better quality outcomes, and greater efficiency – a mechanism termed “the expert influence approach” (Bottger, 1984; Bunderson, 2003b; Libby, Trotman, & Zimmer, 1987; Littlepage et al., 1995).

2.4.3 Prestige

The third dimension of status is prestige. Weberian Stratification (1948) distinguishes individuals along the dimensions of Property (i.e., wealth), Power (i.e., goal-attainment despite opposition), and Prestige (i.e., respect awarded by others). Class is a social order with an economic basis, but status is a social honour (Marx, 1894/1967; Weber, 1914) and an index of social regard and social worth (Weber, 1922)

that “combine[s] the prestige of innate property with the merits of acquisition,” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245; emphasis added). Whereas power (“the capacity to alter others’ states by providing or withholding resources and administering punishments,” (French & Raven, 1959; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003, p. 267) draws others inward toward the subject (Fiske, 1993), status concerns motivate outward to focus on the needs and perspectives of others (Blader & Chen, 2011). That external orientation increases “the social network influences on the process of social judgment formation,” (Bitektine, 2011, p. 174).

2.4.4 *Centrality*

The fourth dimension of status is centrality. As explained above, status is a relative property that is allocated to a target in (social) comparison to his or her peers. Therefore, the more connected peers an individual has, the more opportunity s/he has to “win” over them in a status tournament. Although network theory primarily is concerned with centrality as the number of an actor’s incoming and outgoing ties, their strength, and their role in the network’s efficiency (Bonacich, 1987; Freeman, 1977, 1979), other research traditions broaden this scope to include inclusivity/exclusivity (Faris, 2012) and proximity (Grewal, Lilien, & Mallapragada, 2006; Ibarra & Andrews, 1993).

2.5 NON-CAUSAL CORRELATES OF STATUS

2.5.1 *Expertise*

Expertise is connected intricately to status. The implicit assumption that “status in groups is primarily a function of technical expertise – information and knowledge related to the technical performance of a task,” (Bunderson & Barton, 2011, p. 232; emphasis added) focuses the discussion of signalled quality to recognised expertise. By definition, experts demonstrate “unusual proficiency” and “excite intellectual enthusiasm” among others who ascribe exceptional qualities to them (*Ibid.*). Not only do they themselves achieve excellence, they have the capacity for evoking excellence in others. In the compelling phrase of one theorist, they provide a “bright ambiance”, (Merton, 1968, p. 60). Expertise is one of “many different types of diversity that coexist in teams and their potentially opposing and synergistic effects (Harrison & Klein, 2007),” (Thomas-Hunt & Phillips, 2011, p. 242), and interactions with diversely-talented alters in various roles including coaching, sponsorship, and friendship can be developmental for the target (Kram, 1988).

Moreover, that perceived quality is in turn a performance expectation, to a degree (i.e., a probability of achievement) determined by the states, amounts, and weights of status cues (Bunderson, 2003b) as explained above in §2.4. Given that status is distinct from quality, instead characterised as “a relational property affecting how quality is expected to translate into future rewards,” (Bothner et al., 2011, p. 442), individuals form social judgments from a myriad of manifest cues with varying speed (Kalma, 1991) and reliability (Bunderson, 2003b). The identification and subsequent utilisation of this quality in groups is a status-organising process, making the status hierarchy both critical and pervasive (Bunderson & Barton, 2011). In other words,

quality assessment produces a status hierarchy that dictates patterns of participation, deference, and influence (Bunderson & Barton, 2011; Levine & Moreland, 1990) and affects subsequent quality assessments; this argument is the core premise of Status Characteristics Theory. As Waguespack and Simcoe (2010, p. 19) explain:

This positive feedback loop between status, attention, and quality reconciles some of the tension between sociological theories that emphasize increasing returns to status, and economic models of signaling or reputation, where signals are only used when they convey information about the underlying quality of the sender.

According to Expectation States Theory (Berger, Conner, & Fisek, 1983), perceived expertise begets assumptions of competence and high performance expectations that increase status. Given that “competence claims are important to nonascriptive status claims (Blau, 1977; DiTomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy, 2007)” (Pearce & Xu, 2010, p. 4), expertise attributions must be generally legitimate within a particular constructed social system (Suchman, 1995). Together, propriety and validity yield authorisation and endorsement, i.e., legitimacy (King & Whetten, 2008). Although traditionally a concern for assertions of power and authority, legitimacy is crucial to establish for expertise and status, and status attempts lacking the requisite, legitimating expertise are fruitless and potentially sanctioned (Bunderson & Barton, 2011). Instead, expertise yields status, leading to greater visibility, which in turn increases received attention and help from alters (Ng, 1985; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004). Therefore, status allocation and subsequent enhancement is constrained by expertise.

2.5.2 *Reputation*

The growing literature needs to differentiate between reputation and status (Bitektine, 2011). Although status and reputation have been conflated in some research (e.g., Flynn, 2003; Podolny, 2005; Tyler & Blader, 2003), a distinction exists (Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013). “Status is not the same as information-based reputation, but is imbued with many received, unarticulated assumptions,” (Pearce, 2011b, p. 340; emphasis added).

2.5.2.1 *Definition*

Reputation is “an individual characteristic derived from the underlying social network [that is] globally visible to all members and ascribed to him by them” (Freeman, 1979). An individual’s reputation is the combination of others’ judgments of integrity and performance – i.e., in Zinko’s (Zinko, Ferris, Blass, & Laird, 2007; Zinko, Ferris, Humphrey, Meyer, & Aime, 2012) terms, character and competence.

2.5.2.2 *Distinction between Status and Reputation*

Reputation accrual stems from identified exceptional skill and trusted superior performance compared to one’s peers (Rindova & Fombrun, 1999; Saxton & Saxton, 2011). When compared against an absolute standard (Tsui, 1994) derived from social desirability norms (i.e., performance-based expectations), this signal communicates honour, pride, and prestige. When captured with a relative standard that conveys information about similar others, this signal reflects status and standing. The influence of relative status on the evaluation of absolute pride and respect results in reputation (Tyler & Blader, 2003).

The clearest example of the distinction between status and reputation is the “liability of newness” (Aldrich & Auster, 1986) phenomenon, whereby new market entrants lacking experience have limited legitimacy, a paucity of external network resources, and internal resource constraints. In this instance of a lack of established reputation, local status and/or indeed global status (if inappropriately) might substitute for a reputation deficiency. Reputation reflects favourable behavioural history; status indicates favourable relative social hierarchical position.

2.6 ANTECEDENTS OF STATUS

2.6.1 Introduction

Anthropologists (e.g., Linton, 1936) and sociologists (e.g., Blau, 1955; Parsons, 1951) have proposed that the sticky, immutable, often demographic indicators of an individual (i.e., “ascribed status characteristics”), such as age, gender, race, family origin, and kinship, and the fluid, evolving markers of attainment (i.e., “achieved status characteristics”) including education, income level, and employer type, both serve as antecedents of status. Based on ascription – the sociological explanation for social stratification and inequality (Linton, 1936) – status can be conceived as a consequence of the positions of and subjective connection to the alters, coupled with the inherent descriptors of the target. Rather than utilising diffuse or specific, the distinction of status characteristics should discriminate between characteristics that do not allow for mobility (“ascribed”) versus those that are fluid (“achieved”) (Linton, 1936; Parsons, 1951; Ravlin & Thomas, 2005). Moreover, ascribed status characteristics are performance-irrelevant, and the target cannot control their acquisition; achieved characteristics require effortful acquisition and are thus performance-relevant (Merton,

1968). This situation is equivalent to the person-perception division between existential (i.e., not caused or controlled) or discoverable stigmata and discreditable or achieved stigmata (Falk, 2001; Goffman, 1963). Moreover, because “mere differences” can be sufficient to categorise individuals (according to attribution theory; (Fiske, Berger, & Norman, 1991; Fiske & Taylor, 1991)), ascribed characteristics can be powerful determinants of status.

2.6.2 Status Characteristics Theory

The characteristics by which individuals can be sorted into a prestige order are status cues (Berger, Ridgeway, & Zelditch, 2002); the terms “status cue” and “status characteristic” are interchangeable. Given certain initial conditions, some processes are sufficient to construct these status characteristics (Ridgeway, 1991). In Status Characteristics Theory (Berger et al., 1980; Wagner & Berger, 1993), a nominal characteristic is socially salient with an associated exchangeable resource; a higher resource amount yields a more positive association of N and an increased performance expectation. An increased performance expectation is exhibited as more power and prestige; actors then misattribute this observed high situational social standing (status, which is actually derived from exchangeable resource) to a positive value of nominal characteristic. In other words, actors misattribute differences in ability to differences in the nominal characteristic. The repetition of such interactions creates status beliefs about a nominal characteristic and specific connotations for its social desirability and performance. Higher performance expectations of a target yield increased attention, positive evaluations, and deference received from alters, which in turn provide the target greater influence over group opinion and performance, i.e., goal objects that replace exchangeable resources by including “consummatory” or “status” value

(Veblen, 1899, 1908). Ultimately, a status characteristic is “any recognised social distinction that has attached to it widely shared beliefs about at least two categories, or states, of the distinction,” (Bianchi, Kang, & Stewart, 2012, p. 1), the possession of which confers advantages and the lack of which confers disadvantages.

In research (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Mundell, 1993; Ibarra, 1995; Lin, Vaughn, & Ensel, 1981), the most examined status characteristics are age, gender, race/ethnicity, occupation level, education level, and (perceived) task ability (Berger et al., 1980); recent studies demonstrated the contributions of other characteristics including geography (i.e., “high tech hub location”) and individual and group tenures (i.e., “years of experience”) (Bianchi et al., 2012). Researchers organise status cues into dichotomies. Initially, Hyman’s (1942) split “objective” (criterion-based) and “subjective” (relevant to target’s self-judgments) status used five subscales: economic, social, intellectual, and cultural status and physical attractiveness. More recently (Ridgeway, 1987), theorists argued that information limited to evaluations of general capability and aptitude across a range of task domains comprise diffuse status cues, while richer information concerning aptitude for a clearly defined and specifiable task creates specific status cues (Berger & Zelditch, 1985). Person-perception research demonstrates that diffuse status cues initially serve as schema that trigger implicit biases and stereotypes in the creation of attributions; then, according to social cognition research, individuals focus selectively and strategically on *relevant* cues (i.e., specific status cues) (Ridgeway, 2001).

Status Characteristics Theory frames how evaluations and attitudes – and especially when focused on competence – create stable features that influence interactions (Berger et al., 1977 & Zelditch, 1977). Specifically, the theory considers how overall evaluations of status characteristics are imported into group settings with a

relevant task (Berger & Zelditch, 1985). Status Characteristics Theory purports that even when certain characteristics are unrelated to the task, alters form competence expectations of a target based on a spread of relevance from diffuse to specific (Berger et al., 1977), such that the burden of proof is of a characteristics' irrelevance (Wagner & Berger, 1997). In other words, Status Characteristics Theory presumes that all potential characteristics are relevant to judgments of (task) competence, and thus allocations of status, until demonstrated otherwise.

2.6.3 Opportunities to Test and to Expand Status Characteristics Theory

One limitation of Status Characteristics Theory is that it only considers situations where individuals are task-focused and collectively-oriented (Ridgeway, Kuipers, Boyle, & Robinson, 1998; Webster & Hysom, 1998). However, research has demonstrated that status characteristics are such powerful determinants that they “affect competence evaluation and influence, even when they are irrelevant to the tasks at hand,” (Webster & Hysom, 1998, p. 352). Therefore, the present research will extend status theory in order to account for status allocation in contexts without defined tasks.

Although Berger, Conner, and Fisek (1983) contend that status characteristics are differentially evaluated in terms of honour, esteem, desirability, a second criticism (Driskell & Mullen, 1990) of Status Characteristics Theory is that it is an oversimplification that similarly considers all status characteristics without weighting them differently as predictive of effects. Thus, a potential limitation of Status Characteristics Theory is the assumption that all cues enjoy equal salience and status differs according to this heterogeneity (Berger et al., 1972). A status cue is more salient when there is a true population difference on that characteristic and members are mindful of this difference; this social distinctiveness enhances cue salience if the distribution is skewed (i.e., the majority/minority split is greater than 85/15) or only

tilted (i.e., 15-35% of the population features a particular status characteristic) (cf. Kanter, 1977). Among individuals in a group, homogeneity on a status characteristic reduces the relevance of that cue category. For status characteristics that are heterogeneous in the group, as group tenure increases, the centralisation of power likewise grows; as group member motivation by accuracy increases, specific status clues become more important in judgments of status (Bunderson, 2003a; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Ibarra, 1992; Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). The present research challenges whether all status characteristics contribute equally and additively to the allocation of status.

2.7 ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

As Figure 1 depicts, motivations of reputation and status increase in effectiveness as the organisational structure shifts from market to community. The criterion of organisational structure sorted individuals' work motivations within the traditional extrinsic/intrinsic distinction. However, in order to explain the functionality of overlapping or previously-perceived to be competing motivations (such as concerns for reciprocity conflicting with desires for autonomy) in contemporary competitive strategy, Boudreau and Lakhani (2009) employed the case context of open communities. Open organisations are a rapidly growing sector of the management literature because they represent globally distributed and asynchronous working, which is alternative to the extant face-to-face research contexts. In addition, open organisations are a novel context for the status literature because they provide a situation where uncertainty is the norm and not the exception; this is because “mediated communication suffers from social cue deficiencies [especially] lack of synchronicity and immediacy” (Chou, 2010, p. 830). Moreover, such uncertainty affects decision-making by increasing the need for accurate signals and identification of

experts. Thus, status theory would benefit from deeper understanding of status allocation in open organisations; the present research will achieve this through an investigation of the newest form of open organisation – the electronic network of practice (Wasko & Teigland, 2004).

In order to understand the origin of the electronic network of practice, it is necessary to invoke the literature on communities, networks, and communities of practice (CoP; Brown & Duguid, 1991). First observed as “persistent groups” with “some membership continuity in contiguous stages” (Simmel, 1898) and an “informal organisation” (Barnard, 1938), a community is a group of individuals who share a common interest and (either *ex ante* or *ex post* their formation) an identity, and who interact regularly. Sociology (cf. Brint, 2001) and anthropology (e.g., Turner, 1969) both feature extensive literature traditions concerned with community membership. Following West and Lakhani (2008, p. 224), a community is a “voluntary association of [individual] actors, typically lacking in *a priori* common organisational affiliation ... but united by a shared instrumental goal.” This community’s shared interest “may be a hobby, something the community members are passionate about, a common goal, a common project, or merely the preference for a similar lifestyle, geographical location, or profession,” (Wu, 2011a).

A self-selecting, self-sustaining community organised with the purpose of professional skills development and knowledge exchange is termed a community of practice (cf. Adler, Kwon, & Heckscher, 2008). Ongoing interaction for the deepening of knowledge is their hallmark (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Members are “informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise . . . [and] share their experiences and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that foster new approaches to problems,” (Wegner & Snyder, 2000; Wellman & Gulia, 1999b).

These organisational forms leverage natural social structures (Wenger, 1999) into powerful tools for learning and innovation.

Communities of practice are an important part of the organisational literature as part of the knowledge-based view (KBV) of the firm (Murillo, 2011), and because an organisation can be defined as community of communities of practice (Brown & Duguid, 1998). Moreover, communities of practice contribute to applied organisation studies because their members “accelerate business results and add value by collaborating directly, using one another and outside resources, to learn and teach each other,” (Moran & Weimer, 2004, p. 127). Participation in a community of practice is recognised as a core competence (Kankanhalli, Tan, & Wei, 2005; Wenger, 1998), and is an effort to establish professional status (Hara, 2009).

A true community (Wellman & Gulia, 1999a, 1999b) is a close group that shares a common identity; in contrast, a network is a loose structure of a pattern of relationships. Taking an advice network as an example, this type of network “indicates the patterns of advice seeking among individuals in the organisation on work-related matters, in which individuals share resources such as information, assistance, and guidance related to their work,” (Venkataramani, Green, & Schleicher, 2010, p. 1073); importantly, the advice network persists after knowledge task is completed. Nomination to an advice network (Marsden, 1990) reflects perceived expertise, and particularly its components (Nebus, 2006): accessibility (Culnan, 1983; O'Reilly, 1982), trustworthiness (Andrews & Delahaye, 2000; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998), credibility (Fisher, Ilgen, & Hoyer, 1979; O'Reilly & Roberts, 1976), and knowledge (Zmud, 1978). A network can be an efficient tool for information search.

Analogous to the link between communities and a community of practice, networks have a dedicated professional form in the network of practice (Brown &

Duguid, 2000). Either a single community or a constellation of communities, a network of practice includes members of the same profession who do not share an organisational identity but instead affiliate as an epistemic culture, “bonded through affinity, necessity [and] historical coincidence” (Knorr Cetina, 1999, p. 1). Such members form a virtual guild (Ridings & Gefen, 2004; Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002) that is characterised by geographic dispersion, similar to the definition a problem-solving virtual community: “open, large-scale, and voluntary, and often [assuming] the form of publicly accessible discussion forums,” (Ridings & Gefen, 2004; Ridings et al., 2002; Yu, Jiang, & Chan, 2011, p. 153). In the case of a network of practice, “large” means more than 1500 active members (Roberts, 2006). The network of practice is the more enduring, task-nonspecific form of Lindkvist’s (2005) collectivity of practice.

There are commonalities between a network of practice and a social network – most notably, that network analytic methods attempting to predict an individual’s status within the network and the shape of the target’s relationships to others in the status hierarchy can be used to investigate both – but the differences are important to preserve. Wu notes that, “in a social network, people are held together by pre-established interpersonal relationships such as kinship, friendship, classmates, colleagues, business partners, etc. [and the] connections are built one at a time,” (2011a). In networks of practice, relationships necessarily cross the boundaries of work and leisure (van Maanen & Barley, 1984) among others (Lakhani & von Hippel, 2003), in order to leverage pre-existing practices (Gherardi, 2006) for the creation of a knowledge network (Büchel & Raub, 2002). Given that networks of practice necessitate joint social histories and enterprises despite geographical dispersion and indirect communications, the most efficient form that these organisational units can take is the electronic network of practice.

2.7.1 *Definition*

An electronic network of practice (ENoP) is a “computer-mediated social space where individuals working on similar problems self-organise to help each other and share knowledge, advice, and perspectives about their occupational practice or common interests,” (Wasko et al., 2009, p. 254). Moreover, an electronic network of practice provides structure for “members who inhabit geographically dispersed locations and who interact mainly through electronic forms of communication to perform interdependent tasks guided by a common purpose,” (Bianchi et al., 2012, p. 1). The electronic network of practice is a “new organisational form” (Chou, 2010) that requires attention in the management literature.

There is a rich literature concerning networked organisations and online communities (cf. the thorough treatment in von Hippel’s (2005) canonical overview). However, the majority of the research has focused on open innovation, which features groups of (Fleming & Waguespack, 2007, pp. 165-6):

... unpaid volunteers who work informally, attempt to keep their processes of innovation public and available to any qualified contributor, and seek to distribute their work at no charge ... [such communities] typically lack financial or corporate backing, forgo personal ownership rights to their members’ work, rely on volunteers, and eschew formal planning and management structures.

In contrast, the development of an electronic network of practice requires management support in order to convert communities of practitioners into a group of individuals, organised around a common interest or purpose, whose actions serve individual and collective interests over the short- and long-term. Active intervention is necessary because the lack of frequent face-to-face interaction increases the propensity to free-

ride (Albanese & van Fleet, 1985; Baldwin & Clark, 2006) when solving the collective action problem (Olson, 1965) or “Hobbesian Leviathan problem”, which itself requires individuals to contribute to a group resource from which they will later gain individual utility. The solution is “increased commitment to the community ... [leading] attendees to be more engaged in generalized reciprocity,” (Sessions, 2010, p. 391).

In other words, the electronic network of practice operates through the mechanism of generalized exchange. Generalized Exchange is the market system in which transactions function through indirect reciprocity (Ekeh, 1974; Sahlins, 1972); it is the plural case of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). In Generalized Exchange, the network – as comprised of at least three agents and as features at least two unilateral transfers – lacks a fixed structure of giving and receiving (Takahashi, 2000). Receipt begets an obligation of reciprocation (Bearman, 1997; Molm et al., 2007a; Molm, Schaefer, & Collett, 2007b; Takahashi, 2000; Yamagishi & Cook, 1993), but that obligation may be discharged to any other member in the network. Subsequent outputs may be unequal, delayed, and/or directed to a different beneficiary (Ekeh, 1974; Malinowski, 1920; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993).

Electronic network of practice members who participate actively in the creation and exchange of knowledge goods are rewarded with positive reputation and increased status, which are strong signals of quality. Such signalling becomes a “key mechanism for mitigating risk, reducing uncertainties, and increasing trust [in markets],” (Paolucci et al., 2009, p. 14), and this manner of status-seeking becomes a strong participation driver. The withdrawal and/or withholding of such status as consequence of selfish activity – i.e., sanctioning – is a vital tool of governance that facilitates the flexible self-regulation and maintains the social order in electronic networks of practice (Hahn et al., 2007). Through signalling and sanctioning, status “will be the ‘glue’ that keeps partners

together, and [which] alleviates the problems of free-riding and shirking,” (Tadelis, 1999, p. 552). Moreover, “the competition for [status] through [generalized exchange] sustains cooperation and productivity,” (Sakamoto et al., 2010, p. 6).

Thus, reciprocity and contribution are fostered through systems of reputation (Milinski, Semmann, & Krambeck, 2002) and status (Fleming & Waguespack, 2007). There is compelling research evidence that practitioners in electronic networks strongly are motivated by increases to personal status (Lerner & Tirole, 2002) and professional reputations (Oreg & Nov, 2008) – in addition to varying evidence regarding the power of anticipated extrinsic benefits (e.g., economic rewards, performance expectancy), intrinsic benefits (sense of self-worth, social norms, self-efficacy, enjoyment), and social capital (cf. Brabham, 2008; Chiu, Hsu, & Wang, 2006; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Cook, 2008; Hars & Ou, 2002; Jeppesen & Frederiksen, 2006; Lerner & Tirole, 2002; Nov, 2007; Organisciak, 2008; von Hippel & von Krogh, 2003; von Krogh, 1998; Wasko & Faraj, 2005). Identifying the definitive solution to this question is beyond the scope of the present research (cf. Lakhani & Wolf, 2005; Wasko & Faraj, 2005).

However, there is lamentably less research on the mechanism of status driving activity in Leviathan groups such as an electronic network of practice (cf. Molm et al., 2007a; Molm et al., 2007b). Perhaps this gap exists because there is a dearth of studies “that operationalize and measure reciprocity in natural settings,” (Sakamoto et al., 2010, p. 4). The present research aims to address this gap through investigating status in electronic networks of practice. Building this body of knowledge is important because of the as-argued strong need to apply existing status theory to this novel organisational context, and of the potential to extend new theoretical insights developed concerning electronic networks of practice to “other social aggregates, including classically defined teams” (Groysberg, Polzer, & Elfenbein, 2011, p. 735) and traditional, co-located

organisations. The present project addressed this research need through a case context of the SAP Community Network – the electronic network of practice central to SAP AG, the largest software firm in Europe.

2.7.2 *Specific Case Context: SAP COMMUNITY-NETWORK (SCN)*

Founded in 1972 as “Systems Applications and Products in Data Processing”, SAP AG (a major German information technology company; hereafter, just “SAP”) serves over 190,000 customers as the world’s leading enterprise application software provider and the third largest software company worldwide.

The SAP electronic network of practice launched in 2003, first branded as “DevNet” and then as the SAP Developer Network (SDN), a resource for software writers and testers. Shai Agassi created the SAP electronic network to support the new SAP NetWeaver software platform with “collaborative community communication (C³)” (Cmehil, 2013). SAP espouses a motivation for (Fahey et al., 2007, p. 190):

... developing stronger peer-to-peer and customer-to-SAP relationships online; increasing brand awareness of SAP solutions; accelerating purchase decisions, implementation and usage of SAP solutions; obtaining product development insights, improving its go-to-market approach and building strategic market intelligence; reaching and attracting the target business market on a global basis in a scalable and cost-effective manner.

Experts ascertain that the electronic network of practice functions “to retain hyper-affiliated members, increase participation, provide an incentive for new members to return and serve as a cost-effective public relations reward timeline,” (Fahey et al.,

2007, p. 191). The membership is a *mélange* across the business ecosystem (Moore, 1993) from SAP employees to contributors from the general public, including small and large customers, vendors and prospective clients, partners, service providers, students and teachers, independent consultants, industry pundits, and influencers. According to Mark Yolton, the Senior Vice-President of Digital, Social, Communities, SAP has created in its electronic network of practice an “effective conduit to rapid solution implementation and collaborative innovation” (Yolton, 2011) – focused on social commerce, social intelligence, social insight, and social innovation.

By 2004, the SAP Electronic network of practice had 100,000 members, interacting in both language- and country-specific arenas as well as global blogs and Jive forums. Those forum posts reached one million in 2005, inspiring the addition of Wikis and a “Business Process Expert” (BPX) subgroup for non-developers in 2006. Membership reached 1,000,000 unique users in December 2007, the same year that Moderators began to govern the community and the Electronic network of practice was rebranded as SAP Community-Network (SCN) (see Appendix 1). In addition, the SAP Mentors initiative that identifies and promotes core community influencers across the ecosystem (including those powerful offline in addition to online power users) began. Next, two subgroups – SAP Business Objects and University Alliances – were added in 2008. In response to member demand, an online store (“EcoHub”), Career Center, and RSS-feed functionality debuted in 2009, when membership derived from 229 countries and the annual conference hosted 12,000 attendees. The milestone of two million user profiles (reached in 2010) necessitated creation of a Business Card, which has since been revamped (see Appendix 7). That same year, rich media functionality (including videos and podcasts) was integrated; next, Code Exchange and IdeaPlace (a crowdsourcing “suggestion box”) were both added in 2011. As of Q1 2012, SCN had over two million registered members (growing at 30,000 new members per month)

from more than 200 countries and territories; the membership is vibrant, including 1.5 million unique monthly visitors (making 20 million page views per month) and one million newsletter subscribers. That activity generates more than 65,000 contributions per year, and a new platform (“SCN Beta”) was created in order to simplify and thus to improve the user experience. As Neisser (2011) summarised, “SAP has quietly built a B2B social media juggernaut that puts most ... groups (whether B2B or B2C) to shame on just about any measure.”

As summarised by SVP Yolton (2011), “SAP has not only recognised but has embraced, promoted, and turbo-charged the value of social networking for its business – all of its business lifecycle.” Since its initiation in 2003, more than 8.7 million discussion posts and questions have been posted to the forums (equivalent to more than 3,200 posts per day), bringing the average time to answer down to just 20 minutes. The archives contain over one million knowledge items (inclusive of eLearning) on all SAP products and service solutions, created by more than 250,000 unique authors including 9,000 bloggers (writing 300 posts per month). Participation in this knowledge exchange facilitates the identification of and subsequent connection to recognised experts in relevant topics, and both performance metrics and status systems are integral to this process.

2.7.3 Status in the SAP Community Network

SAP Community Network has so many members that it requires systems of differentiation among them. Some of these systems are official and top-down, such as the for-profit educational program that conveys professional certification after completion of each paid training course. Some of these systems evolve bottom-up, such as the “Cert5” initiative. The Cert5 are a small group of high visibility (see Appendix 15), multi-national, prolific contributing SAP topic experts who joined

together in a voluntary project team. That team intended to overhaul the certification system using “scrum” and “guerrilla” methods (Cmehil, 2013), and their efforts resulted in improved services for the general membership of the SAP ecosystem, and high status for themselves. The commonality across these two types of distinction systems is that both origins are recognised among SCN members as legitimate. This is important for management practitioners to realise because they need to embrace such popular bottom-up initiatives in order to avoid alienating their wider organisational membership. Complementarily, it is important for management research to empirically examine top-down status initiatives in order to enrich theories of status construction – since extant research has focused almost exclusively on emergent status within small groups and teams.

Organisations institute top-down these status tournaments in order to achieve strategic objectives. The primary purpose is signalling – i.e., identifying the experts within the professional community. In the example of the SAP Community Network, the environment is high-technology, globally distributed, and asynchronous, which (as argued previously) together creates high uncertainty. In this context, individuals with high network visibility would have a higher probability of identification as an expert which is correlated with status conferral (Bunderson, 2003b).

The second purpose of a top-down status system is motivation – that is, to increase members’ engagement with the organisation’s objectives and strategy. Increased status serves as an extrinsic reward for desirable (i.e., strategically-aligned), instrumental behaviours. Members accept this reward as part of a social exchange bargain with the organisation whereby individuals’ benefits from membership are greater than the costs (that is, the effort required to maintain participation). Emerson created a framework that explains the connection between behaviour and outcome such that the individual-organisation relationship is sustained. First, individual

behaviour that has positive consequences is likely to be repeated (“The Success Proposition”); second, individual behaviour that has been rewarded is likely to be continued (“The Stimulus Proposition”); third, behavioural consequences that have value for the individual increase the likelihood that the behaviour will occur (“The Value Proposition”); fourth, the value of a repeated reward to an individual diminishes over time (“The Deprivation-Satiation Proposition”); and fifth, that behavioural rewards elicit emotional responses. In the SAP Community Network context, these five propositions explain why individual members’ contributions to the electronic network of practice continue labouring for a status reward, and also why new status hierarchies are created in order to refresh the desirability of the reward.

The management of the SAP Community Network instituted separate, non-competitive status hierarchies intended to recognise different yet equally desirable behaviours. Each list rewards behaviours consistent with different values. The SCN Topic Leaders prize high productivity of contributions (both quantity and, to a lesser extent, quality). The Moderators reward service, teaching ability (particularly to new entrants), integrity, and role modelling. The SAP Mentors recognise leadership and alignment with SAP’s strategic objectives. Requirements for short-listing to each of these status hierarchies are prominently posted (see Appendix 10), and top-up activity is encouraged. Selection from the shortlist to the final high status echelon is not always transparent. However, this neither delegitimizes nor destabilises the system; on the contrary, this opacity is associated with an exceptionally high opt-in to the status tournament.

2.8 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Despite the exclusion of the status literature from a recent major review of cross-cultural organizational behaviour (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007), status and culture are linked strongly. Culture may be national (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1997; Hofstede, 1980, 2001; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta), possess the same orientations as national cultures (Torelli, Leslie, Stoner, & Puente, 2014), or derive from the organization (Trice, 1993; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Moreover, tight cultures (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006) featuring strong norms and sanctioning – among other strong situations (Meyer, Dalal, & Hermida, 2010) – can restrict the full expression of individual differences. Similarity-attraction (Byrne et al., 1971) and homophilic preferences (Ibarra, 1995; McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001) can create in-group/out-group distinctions (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel, 1981; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) by which to sort and then rank individuals (*v.s.* Section 2.4.1).

Status Characteristics Theory (Berger et al., 1980) holds that individual characteristics reflecting the group's culture will convey on possessors high performance expectations and thus high status. By extension, the determinants of status are context-dependent, varying with cultural values (Fragale, 2006). Bianchi et al. (2012, p. 341) proposed that “organizational contexts create boundaries around groups in which new and extant status characteristics are activated and in which predefined characteristics inherited from more global, society-level contexts [may be] deactivated.” The present research investigated these cultural contingencies on potential status antecedents.

To understand the relationship between status and performance, research must endeavour to separate public status and private evaluations of effectiveness. However,

this task is complicated by the inherent difficulty in ascertaining public and private attitudes (Groysberg et al., 2011). At the same time (t_1), status and performance are independent yet often conflated; status frequently serves as a proxy for performance (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1997; Hofstede, 1980, 2001; House et al.). Previously, this substitution primarily yielded evidence with mixed results concerning the relationship between status and performance. Unfortunately, the link between true quality and observed performance is indirect, perhaps only a signal (Benjamin & Podolny, 1999; Gould, 2002; Podolny, 2005), as discussed in Sections 1.1 and 2.5.1. An intuitive assumption that status indicates high performance persists – even in the presence of traditional organisational behaviour metrics of success, including better quality decisions, fewer errors, and greater efficiency. Therefore, it is necessary to separate performance from status.

2.8.1 *Ascribed Status Characteristics*

2.8.1.1 Gender

Gender is a classic ascribed characteristic because it is fixed and visible. Moreover, gender is the main demographic variable that features in the status literature (Berger et al., 1980). Person-perception research (Webster & Foschi, 1988) demonstrates that gender is one of the first characteristics recognised upon encountering a novel individual (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), as well as a primary characteristic by which the memory of that individual is subsequently categorised. In most cultures, gender provides a baseline social expectation of behavioural appropriateness (Eagly, 1987; Ridgeway & Bourg, 2004). Status Characteristics Theory (Wagner & Berger, 1993) holds that whichever gender enjoys higher status in wider society will be associated with higher status in the focal group. Status-enhancing

behaviour is normatively (Cialdini & Trost, 1998) appropriate for men, with little of the cost (Ridgeway & Berger, 1986; Sampson, 1963, 1969) that women pay. Thus, men traditionally have more status than women (Basow, 1986; Ickes & Knowles, 1982; Kanter, 1977) based on this typically immutable characteristic.

Contrary to a horizontal organizational, the majority of online communities champion openness, sharing, and decentralization of power (cf. Lakhani & Wolf, 2005; Raymond, 2001; von Krogh, Haefliger, Spaeth, & Wallin, 2012), as well as devolved governance (e.g., O'Mahony, 2003; O'Mahony & Ferraro, 2007). In other words, electronic networks of practice operate an ethic of meritocracy (Levy, 1984). Meritocracy supports status allocation based on ability differentiation and effortful acquisition (Castilla, 2008; Castilla & Benard, 2010; Hing et al., 2011), instead of foundations that replicate the societal *status quo*. Therefore, in the electronic network of practice context, gender is subject to a cultural contingency, such that:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): In the SAP Community Network, gender will have no effect on the likelihood of status allocation.

Given that organizational demography (Lawrence, 1997; Pfeffer, 1983) includes the individual's fixed characteristics, his/her relationship with the organization, and his/her position in society, then gender is an organizational demographic. Considering gender thusly allows the evaluation of its role in organizational success. Research demonstrates that gender diversity contributes to organizational performance, and that there is no difference between men and women on their individual performance (Fenwick & Neal, 2001). This conclusion has two root sources. First, although men and women differ in their work behaviours, perceived differences in outcomes are due to observers' attributions and not to the underlying quality of the individuals' performance (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993). Second, any negative performance pressure a

minority group experiences decreases as the size of that group increases (Spangler, Gordon, & Pipkin, 1978); in other words, as the gender heterogeneity approaches balanced, the minority group members' performance should approach the majority group members'. Moreover, a meritocratic context that rewards performance rather than either individual differences or structural properties could favour the minority group – particularly when women comprise the smaller proportion (Melamed, 1995). Thus, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): In the SAP Community Network, gender will have no effect on contemporary performance.

2.8.1.2 Geographic Location

Status Characteristics Theory (Berger et al., 1980) predicts that geography would influence status allocation only if location conveyed a culturally-valued performance advantage. Roberts and colleagues (Roberts, Khaire, & Rider, 2011) suggested that geographic region should not affect status allocation. In contrast, Bianchi and partners (2012) studied distributed software coders and revealed that geography became meaningful – perhaps as a quality signal (Berger & Fisek, 2006; Grewal et al., 2006) or as an indicator of network centrality (Ibarra & Andrews, 1993). Given the paucity of research in contexts that are both global and virtual (Gibson, Huang, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 2014), there is no *a priori* reason to expect geography to impact status allocation in electronic networks of practice.

The research context of the SAP Community Network does not demonstrate a preference for one geographic region over another. Although the *lingua franca* is English – functionally, “Globish” (McCrum, 2010) – linguistic diversity is maintained through dedicated topic areas for the most prevalent languages, including Portuguese, Chinese,

and Japanese. Moreover, SAP holds its major annual conference in a “travelling roadshow” format that repeats the same content sequentially in North America, EMEA, Bangalore, and China (the latter in Mandarin). In addition, SAP rotates the location of its developers’ conference so that each region can host. Inherent in this distributed knowledge community is a reduced importance of fixed location and corresponding national culture, traditionally stalwart ascribed status characteristics. Thus, the virtual nature of the SAP Community Network is a cultural contingency that deactivates geographic location as an ascribed status characteristic, such that:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): In the SAP Community Network, geographic location will have no effect on the likelihood of status allocation.

Freeman and Audia (2011) identify a cultural contingency on success where geographic region only influences performance through the underlying community (network) structure. Geography as a structural contingency (Hollenbeck et al., 2002) may impact person-team fit and performance. However, Stuart and Sorenson (2003) argue that geographic region should have no effect on performance. Given that there is no theoretical consensus concerning the contribution of geography to performance, there is no *a priori* reason to expect geography to impact status allocation in electronic networks of practice. Moreover, as explained above, the SAP Community Network is a meritocracy in which the performance metrics makes no consideration of factors beyond the quantity and quality of contributions to the knowledge commons. Therefore:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): In the SAP Community Network, geographic location will have no effect on contemporary performance.

2.8.2 *Achieved Status Characteristics*

2.8.2.1 *Tenure*

Organisational tenure – or length of service (LOS; Reagans & Zuckerman, 2001) – is the length of employment at a single organisation (McEnrue, 1988). Status Characteristics Theory (Berger et al., 1977) would predict that if tenure increases the expectation of performance, then longer tenure would increase the likelihood of status acquisition. Some evidence suggests longer tenure is associated with higher status allocation (Perretti & Negro, 2006). Tenure increases the importance of demographic diversity within groups (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998), which recent research (Giambatista & Bhappu, 2010) has confirmed both separates by social category and informs non-redundantly. In other words, the longer an individual belongs to a group, the more his/her distinctive qualities serve to differentiate him/her from the alters, and the higher status he/she acquires.

Duration of membership in an organization is directly associated with knowledge of governance (Larson, 1992) and reward systems (Rollag, 2004), obtained through knowledge-sharing efficiencies (Brown & Duguid, 1998; Büchel & Raub, 2002; Lovaglia, 1995; Swan, Newell, Scarbrough, & Hislop, 1999; Thomas-Hunt, Ogden, & Neale, 2003). Moreover, this virtuous circle (Garud & Kumaraswamy, 2005) accumulates into expertise. Thus, increased tenure is associated with increased expertise (Bunderson & Barton, 2011; Cheng et al., 2013; Libby et al., 1987). Status Characteristics Theory considers expertise to be a performance expectation (Bottger, 1984; Bunderson, 2003b; Bunderson & Barton, 2011; Tajeddin, Safayeni, Connelly, & Tasa, 2012; Thomas-Hunt et al., 2003) that should increase status through efficient identification of decision-makers (see explanations in Sections 2.4.2 and 2.5.1).

By definition a rare and desirable reflection of prestige, high status applies to a minority of members. The SAP Community Network environment encourages LOS and facilitates status allocation after long tenure because the tournament for status has no opt-out mechanism other than leaving the electronic network of practice. Given that demonstrable mastery of SCN rules and best practices is an entry requirement for high status (specifically, SCN Moderators), it follows that longer tenure should be associated with higher status. Therefore:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): In the SAP electronic network of practice, longer tenure will increase the likelihood of status allocation.

Greater length of service affects status, innovation (O'Reilly & Flatt, 1986), and turnover (O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989). The liability of newness phenomenon – i.e., that the hazard of failure decreases with age – is well established (Stinchcombe, 1965). Recent research (Le Mens, Hannan, & Pólos, 2011) has revealed that, even if past performance is constant, the hazard of failure changes with the surviving composition, which mixes new entrants with successful extant members. In other words, as tenure increases, the level of quality engagement also rises, which increases the likelihood of success. Individuals with similar LOS form a cohort with its own effect on social integration, communication, and future similarity; through these cohort effects, longer tenure increases the importance of human capital to performance (Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, & Ketchen, 2011). A lack of these cohort effects disadvantages high status individuals (i.e., “stars”) poached into a new group who subsequently suffer a short-term drop in performance due to corresponding newly-low tenure; this performance hit can continue into the long-term if their status and skills are not leveraged appropriately (Groysberg & Lee, 2009).

The SAP Community Network provides an outlet for knowledge workers to remain active and engaged in the electronic network of practice independent of changes in employment status (e.g., job level, employer type, entrepreneurship, or unemployment). Similar to the status tournament, the performance recognition system has no opt-out mechanism; members with low performance have a baseline score of zero, as opposed to no-score. Together, these measures ensure that the performance system rewards activity that is strategically important to the success of the network – i.e., the creation of, and engagement with, knowledge. Thus:

Hypothesis 6 (H6): In the SAP electronic network of practice, longer tenure will increase contemporary performance.

2.8.2.2 Employer Type

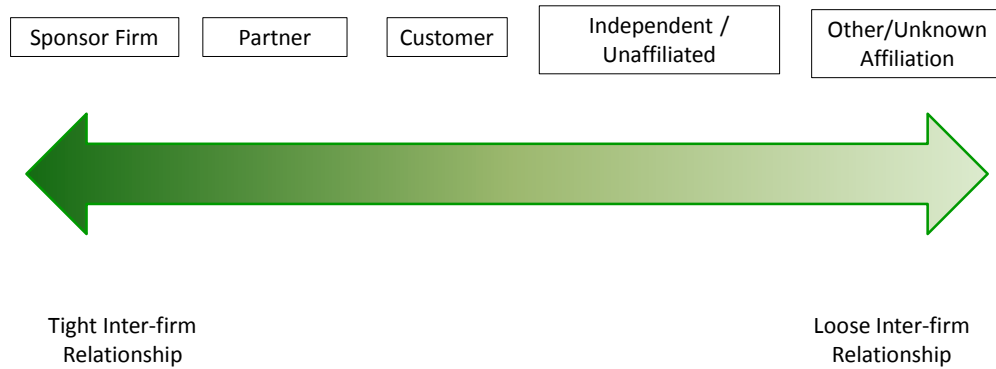
The core Status Characteristics Theory (Berger et al., 1977) makes no mention of the type of firm for which an individual works as a predictor of his/her status allocation. The present research proposes employer type as an achieved status characteristic.

Employers' different roles in the ecosystem (e.g., developer, producer, customer, or consultant/educator) convey varying competitive advantages and disadvantages to their employees in a super-organisation such as an electronic network of practice. There is reason to believe that employees of a firm which sponsors an electronic network of practice might benefit from a halo effect (Thorndike, 1920) associated with that brand and its presumed expertise and institutional support. Some research (Burton, Sorensen, & Beckman, 2002) determined that the structural position of a target individual's prior employer accrues resources to that ex-employee even when he/she is part of a new organization.

In the SAP Community Network, individual members employed by the host firm (i.e., SAP), co-developers (i.e., “Partners”), customers, and consultants all participate in the electronic network of practice. The sponsor firm, SAP, and its peer Partner firms are market-leaders in their respective sectors, and association with these employers is anticipated to have perceived external prestige (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) – signalling quality, expertise, and ultimately status. Partner firms’ employees are anticipated to have higher status than other firms’ employees up to equivalent status to SAP employees. Given that nearly 25% of SAP Community Network members work for a firm that is a Customer of SAP, and that these members represent a wide range of organisations, employment by a Customer firm is expected to have higher status than other firms’ employees up to equivalent status to Partner employees. Individuals working as independent consultants might have some burden to establish their reputation in order to overcome the liability of newness (Rao, 1994). However, the high-technology industry is special in that labourers at both the top and the bottom of the talent range work independently – the former for reasons of autonomy and market pricing, and the latter until they build both expertise and reputation. As explained above in Sections 1.1 and 2.7, quality signals impact status allocation, particularly under conditions of increased uncertainty. Following this logic, a lack of information about a participant’s employer should have a detrimental effect on his or her status assignment. In other words, individuals with no employment information should have lower status than individuals employed in any other capacity. Therefore:

Hypothesis 7 (H7): In the SAP electronic network of practice, the looser the employing firm’s inter-firm relationship with SAP, the lower the individual’s likelihood of status allocation.

Figure 3: Structure of the Inter-firm Ecosystem



Employer prestige is known to signal worker employability (Bidwell, Won, Barbulescu, & Mollick, 2014). It is less certain whether the structure and ecosystem position of the employer affects the employees' individual performance in a super-organization. If the individual's employer is considered as a node in a network which includes the super-organization at its centre, then the network paradigm of organizational research (Borgatti & Foster, 2003) provides a lens through which to understand the effect of inter-firm relationships on individual performance. Employers give sanction and resources (especially time) for individuals to develop and to share expertise. If this expertise is dispersed as knowledge complexity intensifies, then individuals and firms become situated in networks of learning (Powell, Koput, & Smith-Doerr, 1996). The closer the individual or firm is to the information corpus, then the more central he/she becomes in the knowledge network (Freeman, 1979) – of which an electronic network of practice is one organizational form. The effect of network centrality on status has been proposed (Section 2.4.4) and hypothesized above; there is some evidence (Grewal et al., 2006; Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 2001) that the affect on individual performance functions similarly. Therefore:

Hypothesis 8 (H8): In the SAP electronic network of practice, the looser the employing firm's inter-firm relationship with SAP, the lower the individual's contemporary performance.

2.8.2.3 Accolades

Status Characteristic Theory (Berger et al., 1977) would expect quality signals to increase performance expectations and, ultimately, status. Markers of achievement such as awards and honorific titles are a strong signal of underlying quality (Podolny, 2005; Spence, 1974). Overall, accolades indicate congruence with culturally-valued characteristics that subsequently confer status. As a status indicator, accolades might function through the mechanism of network visibility (Rindova, Petkova, & Kotha, 2007).

As explained in Sections 2.3.4 and 2.4.2. Mertonian Matthew Effects (Azoulay, Stuart, & Wang, 2012, 2014; Merton, 1968) accord more recognition to individuals who already have higher status than to those who have lower status, but for the same effort and quality. At all levels of the status hierarchy, the demand for accolades reflects the individual desire for social distinction (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; *v.s.* Section 2.4.1). As such, “awards are one of the most important producers of status,” (Frey, 2006, p. 378; emphasis added).

By design, participation in the SAP Community Network encourages visibility (Reed, 2010). In one example, competitive selection to lead a conference session is a clear signal of both expertise and social comparison. Presenting at a highly-selective conference provides a clear increase to visibility (see Appendices 12 and 14), and is associated with an increase in prestige. Thus:

Hypothesis 9 (H9): In the SAP electronic network of practice, accolades will increase the likelihood of status allocation.

Accolades are a “nonmaterial extrinsic incentive” (Azoulay et al., 2012, 2014; Merton, 1968) whose supply acts as motivator for individual performance (Osterloh & Frey, 2000). Accolades provide good incentives (even better than does financial compensation) for improved performance when the nature of the contribution is hard to measure (Besley & Ghatak, 2008; Frey & Osterloh, 2002), such as in an electronic network of practice. That effect is driven by employees’ perception of awards as organizational support against motivational “crowding out” (as explained in Section 2.1), and this in turn increases performance (Hamner, 1975). Externally, awards influence perceived competence and expertise (Heppner & Pew, 1977) as they function as a form of compensation (Frey, 2007) for high performance. Increased employee mobility (Roberts et al., 2011) reflects a virtuous circle between accolades and improved performance.

The SAP conference organizers award program slots to sessions featuring topics of wide appeal and individual leaders likely to attract large attendance. In their considerations, high performance in the SAP Community Network is a good proxy for high engagement with potential conference attendees. Therefore, competitive selection to the Conference Presenter award is likely to be associated with higher performance through the Contest Year. For these theoretical and practical reasons:

Hypothesis 10 (H10): In the SAP electronic network of practice, accolades will increase contemporary performance.

2.8.3 Performance

2.8.3.1 Prior Performance

Individuals labour for status that directly or indirectly results from their improved performance. Job performance is a combination of task (i.e., specific) and contextual (i.e., gestalt) performance (Motowidlo & van Scotter, 1994), which both are influenced by a combination of personal and organizational factors (Pfeffer, 1994). Achieved status characteristics (such as job level or employer prestige) reflect cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and social capital (Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998) as much as individual aptitude differences. It is important to distinguish between these achieved indicators of status capacity and past performance.

In the Status Characteristics Theory model (Berger et al., 1977), states of status characteristics and task performance have different routes to performance expectations via salience and competence judgments, respectively. However, there is no consideration for any connection between states of status characteristics and performance.

Although individual success is universally desirable (Schwartz, 1992), individualistic cultures emphasize personal achievement and self-reliance as evidence for competence and, then, status (Triandis, 1995); this process contrasts with collectivistic cultures, wherein status is achieved through warmth and helping (Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006). Knowledge production environments operate as a middle ground wherein organizational performance is largely a sum of individual performance (Maister, 1993). In this context, an individual's high performance brings to him/her increased visibility and improved mobility (Lazear, 1986), such that he/she becomes an organizational star (Adler, 1985).

In the SAP Community Network, Topic Leader status overlaps with high performance; Topic Leaders are SCN organizational stars. Given that the performance tournament resets on a 12-month basis, one's current status as Topic Leader directly is not affected by performance prior to the reset date. Although prior performance information is not readily available to the general membership, it is available to selectors of new SCN Moderators. Demonstrable expertise in a topic area and overall governance are prerequisites for selection to that rank. In contrast, SAP Mentors are selected for a variety of factors (see explanation in Section 3.3.5.1) that may consider performance in the electronic network of practice. Based on extant research evidence and contextual information, it is anticipated that:

Hypothesis 11a (H11): In the SAP electronic network of practice, prior performance will have no effect on the likelihood of allocation to Topic Leader status.

Hypothesis 11b (H11): In the SAP electronic network of practice, prior performance will increase the likelihood of allocation to SCN Moderator status.

Hypothesis 11c (H11): In the SAP electronic network of practice, prior performance will increase the likelihood of allocation to SAP Mentor status.

In addition to prior performance, other factors can influence current performance. It is possible that the factors (e.g., stable ascribed status characteristics and achieved status characteristics) that led to an individual's success at t_1 might continue to influence his/her performance at t_2 . High-performing employees – i.e., “organizational stars” (Groysberg, Nanda, & Nohria, 2004) – often are poached by rival firms based on the assumption that they can and will continue their stellar performance in that new organization (Gardner, 2005). Unfortunately, some research (Groysberg & Lee, 2009; Groysberg, Lee, & Nanda, 2008) demonstrates that stars can suffer

persistent lower subsequent performance after these such transitions, as can those team members that they leave behind in the base organization (Azoulay, Graff Zivin, & Wang, 2010). If a focal individual does not share knowledge with his/her alters during the process of knowledge production (Hambrick, 1994), then this “knowledge hiding” will trigger a reciprocal distrust loop that will cause those alters to not share with the target, ultimately lowering his/her subsequent performance (Cerne, Nerstad, Dysvik, & Škerlavaj, 2013).

Despite the lack of certain impact that past performance has on future results, research evidence shows that individuals employed in professional service firms are on average 70% likely to maintain or to improve their year-on-year performance (Groysberg & Lee, 2008). Prior performance can be a signal of an underlying capacity for performance (Spence, 1973), contributing to overall competence; advantages that accrue from past success might multiply in a virtuous circle (Allison, Long, & Krauze, 1982; Allison & Stewart, 1974) – i.e., a Matthew Effect (Cole & Cole, 1973; Merton, 1968), as explained in Section 2.3.4. This cumulative advantage operates through increased access to resources (including attention), greater visibility, and improved reputation. In addition, high prior performance might establish a halo effect by which subsequent performance ratings are expected to be high (Brown & Perry, 1994; Cooper, 1981; Jacobs & Kozlowski, 1985). Therefore, it is predicted that:

Hypothesis 12 (H12): In the SAP electronic network of practice, prior performance will increase contemporary performance.

2.8.3.2 Contemporary Performance

There is some literature that considers status (at t_1) to be an antecedent of performance (at t_2) (Christie & Barling, 2010; Washington & Zajac, 2005); Bendersky and Shah (2012) found that those who gained high status had lower performance than did either those who maintained a high status position or those who maintained a stable low status position. At the group level, lower status groups are likely to be more negatively evaluated by others (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) and also by themselves (Ridgeway, 2001). Still other research reveals that high status individuals are more likely to receive (unduly) higher performance evaluations (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Together, this research explains why performance is an important consequence of status.

However, it is important to remember that new entrants who have no prior performance (cf. discussion of reputation in Section 2.5.2 and the hypothesis development in Section 2.8.2.1) also have no status allocation. Status Characteristics Theory (Berger et al., 1980) holds that perceived competence is a key component of the performance expectation and thus a prerequisite for status (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a; Anderson, Spataro, & Flynn, 2008; Fiske et al., 2002). This scenario partially explains why performance increases the likelihood of status allocation (Podolny & Phillips, 1996).

In the SAP Community Network, information about an individual's contemporary performance is readily available with each action in the electronic network of practice (see the visualization in Appendix 7). Although the final identification of SCN Topic Leaders occurs once per year at the end of the 12-month tournament, progress towards that goal, as well as allocation to other high status positions, occurs throughout the period. In the electronic network of practice context,

it is efficient for high performance to rapidly identify experts who then are allocated high status (e.g., Littlepage & Mueller, 1997; v.s. discussion in Sections 2.1.2 and 2.4.1; Thomas-Hunt et al., 2003) – such that:

Hypothesis 13 (H13): In the SAP electronic network of practice, contemporary performance will increase the likelihood of status allocation.

2.8.3.3 Mediation

As explained previously (v.s. Sections 2.4.2 and 2.5.1), Status Characteristics Theory (Berger et al., 1977) is part of the Expectation States Approach (Berger & Conner, 1974) by which the salience of status characteristics and the performance expectations that they engender turn on deference cascades and an inferred status hierarchy. These performance expectations themselves can be turned on through competence judgments (Ridgeway, 1981); in other words, individuals with the capacity for high performance are anticipated to effect the same, and thus are allocated higher status.

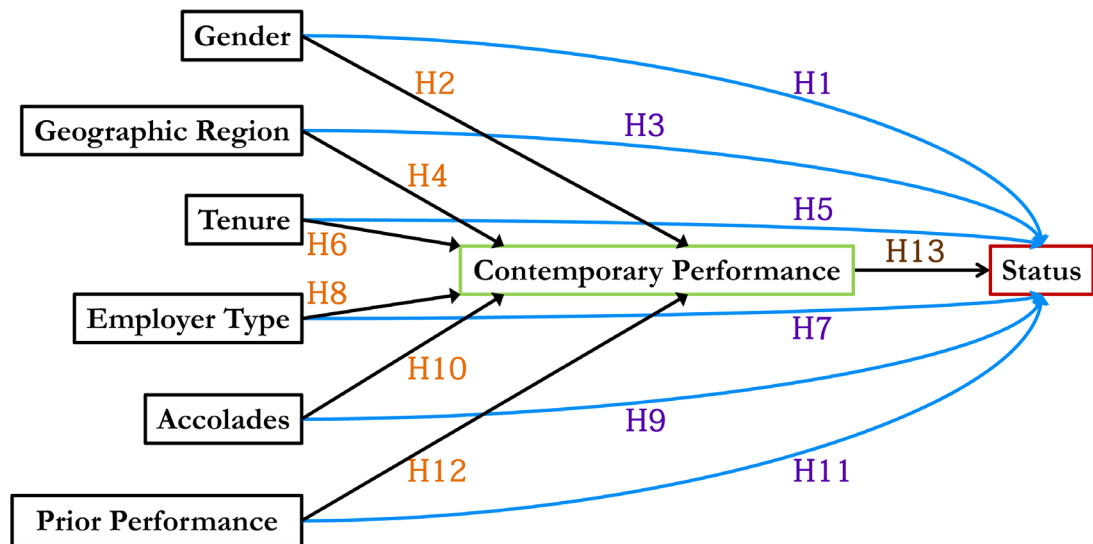
An electronic network of practice does not exist without both knowledge creation and knowledge sharing (Hess & Ostrom, 2006; Zhang & Watts, 2008); the SAP Community Network actively recognizes these behaviours as good performance (Fahey et al., 2007) and uses it as a basis for status allocation (Bunderson & Reagans, 2011). Moreover, the resetting of the status tournament every 12 months means that accolades and prior performance primarily influence status allocation through contemporary performance. In sum, performance is the mechanism through which status antecedents realize their expectation (of performance) and attract a higher status allocation such that:

Hypothesis 14a (H14): In the SAP electronic network of practice, the direct relationship between ascribed status characteristics and status allocation is mediated by contemporary performance.

Hypothesis 14b (H14): In the SAP electronic network of practice, the direct relationship between achieved status characteristics and status allocation is mediated by contemporary performance.

The proposed research framework appears in Figure 4, below. The proposed mediation (H14) is not shown, independently.

Figure 4: Research Framework



CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“Someone already has your idea and is already working on it; you just have to out-execute them.” - Don Valentine

3.1 RESEARCH PROCESS

As described above, the present research investigated the allocation of status within electronic networks of practice. As an exploratory study, the project required rich qualitative information about the foundations, processes, and structures of status operating in that context. This research was achieved through a combination of methods. First, the researcher familiarized herself with open source communities and crowdsourcing platforms through non-interactive observation (i.e., lurking) for a period of 18 months (March 2008 – September 2009). Findings from this procedure shaped the literature review (cf. Mintzberg, 1971) and suggested a potential research tool – netnography (Kozinets, 2002), which is ethnography applied to online communities (Kozinets, 2010).

In October 2009, an early career research colleague suggested the SAP user community as an ideal case site and facilitated introductions for preliminary interviews. The researcher began to apply netnographic techniques to understand the culture of participatory knowledge creation functioning in the SAP Community Network electronic network of practice. However, it soon became clear that the culture would not fully reveal itself to an external investigator. Given the low barrier to entry into the SCN, the decision was taken to continue the research as an embedded participant-observer, starting from November 2009 and detailed in Section 3.2.1.

This next stage of research occurred in two phases – i.e., with private, informal SAP support (November 2009 – September 2010) and then with public, formal SAP

approval (October 2010 – November 2012), including consultant-level access to internal reports and senior executives. In the first phase, the researcher employed snowball sampling techniques to find respondents for semi-structured and structured telephone and e-mail interviews. To start the second phase, the researcher attended SAP's major global conference as a member of the sponsor organization; this high-visibility endorsement of the present research enabled additional access to leaders and added significant legitimacy to the researcher's participant-observation. In addition, access to primary, panel data was granted from January 2011 (the start of an 18-month data collection period).

This corpus-building of research informants facilitated rapid, efficient identification of experts and other users who subsequently would be allocated high status in the electronic network of practice. The focus of the present investigation arose when these actors demonstrated such a great degree of individual variation in demography, experience, and level of participation that it raised the questions of the existence of a unified status structure and its generation by which combination of status indicators. In order to address these key research questions, the project required one procedure to assess group consensus and a second to expose assumptions about status allocation. The present research endeavoured to combine the information diversity of focus groups (cf. Berg, 2012; Merton & Kendall, 1946) with the freedom from bias of implicit attitudes testing (cf. Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Thus, the DELPHI Method (focus group) and the AllOurIdeas.org survey (attitudes test) were selected to identify the status structure and to determine the relevance of specific status indicators as well as to cross-validate each other. The DELPHI Method occurred throughout July and August 2011, and AllOurIdeas.org followed in September 2011.

The first two research stages verified a status outcome that was desirable and broadly supported throughout the electronic network of practice; however, it remained unclear which properties of individuals contributed to their allocation of rank in the status hierarchy. During the final data collection stage (September 2011-September 2012), the principal investigator compiled (and, where necessary, supplemented – see explanation in §3.3.2.1) SAP-owned data of ascribed status characteristics, achievements, and performance. In order to ascertain the factors of high status, it was necessary to conduct (October-December 2012) multivariate analyses of panel data across individuals.

Chapter 3 recounts this multi-method approach – detailing in turn participant-observation, the DELPHI Method, AllOurIdeas.org, and the preparation and processing of panel data. Chapter 4 presents the results of the qualitative methodological triangulation. Chapter 5 reports the outcomes of the multivariate analyses.

3.2 QUALITATIVE MEASURES

3.2.1 Participant-Observation

Various qualitative methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) exist to articulate tacit knowledge through reflexive awareness (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). The gold standard, imported from anthropology (e.g., Malinowski, 1920), is ethnography – i.e., the written representation of a group’s culture. Ethnographic research captures a group’s basic activities and complex social meanings from within the group’s natural setting. Data collection (Fetterman, 1989) involves both notes from primary field research, including the researcher’s first-hand observations, interviews, and surveys, as

well as secondary analysis of documents and cultural artefacts (van Maanen, 1988). Standards for rigorous ethnographic research have coalesced around five criteria (Richardson, 2000, p. 254): Good ethnography 1) makes a substantive contribution from a deeply-grounded perspective; 2) uses creative analytical practices to achieve aesthetic merit; 3) engages reflexively with issues of researcher agency and author subjectivity; 4) generates emotive and intellectual impact in its audience; and 5) expresses a “true” lived experience and resultant credible reality.

Sociology and social psychology have a rich tradition of deploying ethnography in novel organizational settings (e.g, Goffman, 1963). Recent developments have translated this approach’s previous application to indigenous and marginalized sub-cultures for use in understanding online interactions and communities (Hine, 2000; Walther, 1996; Walther & Bunz, 2005). The examination of “non-local communities” (i.e., distributed; Wellman, 1979) predates the Internet. However, the participatory culture (cf. Rheingold, 1993) of specialized information communities (Jenkins, 2006) – such as electronic networks of practice – lends itself particularly to ethnographic methods because users “pivot” between creation and consumption (Bainbridge, 2007). Such behavioural complexity is best reported through the “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of ethnography.

Ethnography is a covert, minimally-interactive research approach employed to produce a detailed cultural account of a group’s shared beliefs, behaviours, interactions, language, and rituals, as well as the events that shape members’ lives (Coughlan, 2007; Coughlan & Brannick, 2005). Ethnographic methods maintain a distance between researcher and subject that is intended to increase objectivity and, thus, ecological validity. However, the cost of this distance is a lack of experiential data that might enrich both the understanding of core mechanisms and the value of any interventions.

The primary way to overcome this limitation is to embed the researcher in the focal group – i.e., participant-observation.

Participant-observation (Jorgensen, 1989) is an overt, immersive research approach that endeavours to achieve “the systematic observation, recording, description, analysis and interpretation of people’s behavior,” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012, p. 340). The addition to ethnography is the researcher’s involvement (along a continuum of levels) in the group’s activities, through which he or she achieves *bona fide* membership (Gill & Johnson, 2002). During participant-observation, data collection and analysis occurs simultaneously (rather than proceeding iteratively) over an extended time period. The primary limitation of participant-observation is the threat to internal validity from the observer-expectancy effect and/or the Hawthorne effect (cf. Rosenthal, 1966). As with other qualitative research approaches, this deficiency can be addressed through methodological triangulation – i.e., systematic, convergent data collection (Kozinets, 1999, 2002).

The principal investigator spent 36 months actively embedded in the SAP Community Network (see Appendix 8). Her participation adopted many forms, including helping one of the founders to edit a ten-year retrospective “biography”; joining a conference call with current SCN Moderators to explore mechanisms for selection and retention; assisting community evangelists (cf. Demetriou & Kawalek, 2010) to improve the awards and incentives system; and writing and commenting on blogs, videos, and other contributions. These rich and varied experiences provided deep knowledge of the structure and function of SAP Community Network, which achieved two objectives. First, it verified that a true status structure exists that had universal recognition and participation among electronic network of practice members. Second, it served to identify and then to pare down the factors involved in status allocation.

However, what remained unclear even after significant participant-observation was which factors acted as antecedents of status, which in fact were manifestations of status outcomes, and what was the relationship of performance to status. These questions were addressed with the mixed methods approach detailed in Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, and the multivariate quantitative analyses explained in Section 3.3.

3.2.2 The DELPHI Method

As described above in Section 3.2.1, the period of participant-observation revealed deep insights about the SAP Community Network and attested to its existence as a knowledge community that necessarily values performance. The examination of status in the electronic network of practice, and the test of Status Characteristics Theory in that context, necessitated the identification of a research method that could capture both variety and consensus representative across the large membership. In addition, the evaluative and emotive nature of sociometric status (Anderson, Kraus, Galinsky, & Keltner, 2012; Nelson & Berry, 1965) indicates that traditional tools such as an attitudinal survey or a group interview were not appropriate.

Instead, the DELPHI Method (Dalkey, 1972; Dalkey & Helmer, 1963) – which resembles nominal group technique (NGT) without the committee discussion (Bartunek & Murnighan, 1984; Tague, 2005) – was selected for its ability to distil a large quantity of ideas to a group's satisfaction through the facilitator's processing (van de Ven & Delbecq, 1974). There is precedent for deployment of the DELPHI Method in order to identify high status and its indicators (Bunderson, 2003b). The present research extended this application to include both ascribed and achieved status characteristics, as well as performance and its distinct and overlapping indicators; in this way, the DELPHI Method examined whether an expert subgroup could identify a

unified status structure which then could be tested with a greater, more representative sample. In addition, given the intention to expose and to verify potential contingencies on Status Characteristics Theory (as proposed in Section 2.8), the DELPHI Method was selected as the most appropriate tool to test the determinism of potential antecedents to status (van de Ven, Delbecq, & Koenig, 1976). In this way, the components for evaluation featured sufficient heterogeneity to facilitate differentiation – a key requirement of construct operationalization (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Cook & Campbell, 1975) – and an explicit ranking that together served to sort status outcomes and performance from their antecedents. Thus, the DELPHI Method helped to select and to categorize the variables that would be involved in the multivariate analyses to follow; the results of all these analyses will be presented in Sections 4.2 and 5.3 and 5.6, respectively.

Following Bunderson (2003b), the DELPHI Method (Dalkey, 1969) was utilised to organise the investigation. Developed by the RAND Corporation, the DELPHI Method is “a widely used and accepted method for achieving convergence of opinion concerning real-world knowledge solicited from experts within certain topic areas,” (Hsu & Sandford, 2007, p. 1). It pursues the following objectives (Delbecq, van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975, p. 11):

1. To determine or develop a range of possible program alternatives
2. To explore or expose underlying assumptions or information leading to different judgments
3. To seek out information that may generate a consensus on the part of the respondent group
4. To correlate informed judgments on a topic spanning a wide range of disciplines
5. To educate the respondent group as to the diverse and interrelated aspects of the topic

Whereas previous research (Crane, 1976; Cummings & Haas, 2012; Linstone & Turoff, 1975) has focused on purposes (2) and (5), the present research context was better matched to goals (3) and (4).

The procedure utilises quantifiably-answerable questions and qualitative elaboration by many anonymous individuals and thus avoids the pitfalls of either *groupthink* or bandwagon, halo, and order effects (Westbrook, 1997). Subjects are selected because they “have somewhat related backgrounds and experiences concerning the target issue, are capable of contributing helpful inputs, and are willing to revise their initial or previous judgments for the purpose of reaching or attaining consensus,” (Hsu & Sandford, 2007, p.3). These experts answer questionnaires in three to five rounds. A “round” consists of the administration of a questionnaire and its subsequent processing by a Facilitator, who filters irrelevant content and provides an anonymized summary of the experts’ previous responses as well as the reasons that they provided for their judgments. Each round can require up to two weeks, and the entire DELPHI procedure can last up to 45 days (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). Experts comment on their own forecasts, the responses of others, and the panel’s progress towards a predetermined goal; then, experts are encouraged to revise their answers in light of this controlled feedback. The process terminates after a pre-defined stop criterion (e.g., number of rounds, achievement of consensus, stability of results), and the mean or median scores of the final rounds are taken as the results.

A potential limitation of the tool is reliance on the Facilitator, which in turn poses challenges to reliability (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). However, the DELPHI Method reports overall response rates of 92% with a less than 10% drop-out rate (Colton & Hatcher, 2004), which is better than most surveys’. This dropout rate exists because “designing a DELPHI includes the process of designing a survey” (Colton &

Hatcher, 2004, p. 11, emphasis added), and identifying the sample (typical n is 10-20) proceeds similarly. The key difference is that the data analysis aims to identify a consensus answer to the research question, and additional “survey” rounds are conducted until consensus is achieved.

Herein, consensus is defined as general agreement, not conformity, and often is operationalized as “having 80 percent of subjects’ votes fall within two categories on a seven-point scale,” (Hsu & Sandford, 2007, p.4). Typical groups require three rounds to reach consensus. DELPHI terminology refers to consensus as a measure of the lack of diversity among panellists’ thinking (Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009). This perspective reflects a key benefit of the DELPHI Method because “at the end of the exercise there may still be a significant spread in individual opinions” (Dalkey, 1972, p. 21), preserving qualitative variance and the richness of information. Various statistics commonly calculated to assess consensus include percentage, mean, and median to determine the majority point, and then interquartile ranges or standard deviations to assess the dispersion of values (Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009).

Bunderson (2003b) cautions that self-preservation bias might make the DELPHI Method inappropriate for diffuse status characteristics and ascribed status characteristics; however, self-preservation bias is no more influential in the DELPHI Method compared with explicit preference inventories and attitudinal surveys. Indeed, this utilisation could be less problematic due to the relative anonymity that the DELPHI procedure provides. Another potential limitation of the DELPHI Method is that it is underused (Sackman, 1975) and therefore lacks universal standards for analyses and interpretation of results (Goodman, 1987). However, these concerns for hyperflexibility and limited generalization – often levied against novel or uncommon approaches – can be overcome with methodological rigor and transparency, and should

not prevent the application of an excellent tool for efficient yet rich group communication.

The present research utilised the DELPHI Method to answer, “On what status characteristics does SCN’s construction of status depend?”, which addresses Debecq et al.’s Purpose 2 (as above). The measures employed appear in their entirety in Appendix 5. In collaboration with SAP governors, a shortlist of 33 SCN experts was identified, from which 11 responded to Round 1, and then of whom 10 completed the entire procedure (three rounds). The final group represented membership across the SAP ecosystem, and all were unique participants to this stage (i.e., they had been neither interviewed nor surveyed prior to the DELPHI).

The main component comprised a rank-ordering task of status characteristics (Walker, Webster, & Bianchi, 2011) relevant to status in SCN, according to the following definition: “any recognised social distinction that has attached to it widely shared beliefs about at least two categories, or states, of the distinction,” (Bianchi et al., 2012, p. 341); in other words, status characteristics are those features whose possession confers advantages and whose lack confers disadvantages or punishments.” Participants responded to the prompt, “Considering the above definition, please order the following status characteristics according to their relevance in the SCN, descending from ‘most relevant’ to ‘least relevant’.”

Twenty-three stems were chosen after 20 months of participant observation (see discussion in Section 3.2.1, and evidence in Appendix 8) and pre-test consultation with SAP platform designers, community evangelists, and other experts previously interviewed. The options represented ascribed and achieved status characteristics as well as performance indicators and recognition outcomes. The full list is “SAP Mentor Role, Moderator Role, SAP Mentor Alumnus, Top Contributor Award, Featured on

SCN Homepage (“Spotlight”), Conference/Event Presenter, SCN Topic Leader Award, Badges, SAP Employee, "Good Citizen" Behaviours, Points Total, Work Experience (Number of Years), Certifications, Number of Successful Projects, Job Level / Occupational Title, English Fluency, User Group Membership, Topic Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP), Tenure in SCN (i.e., from Date Joined), Employee at Partner Organisation, (Formal) Education, Geographical Area, and Non-English Fluency”.

DELPHI panellists sorted the above status indicators, a task that automatically assigned each indicator a hierarchical position from 1 (“most relevant”) to 23 (“least relevant”). The mean, median, and standard deviation were calculated within each stem and across individuals; then, the stems were ranked on this average. If two stems had the same mean position value, then the stem with the lower standard deviation was ranked at the disputed position (i.e., higher), followed by the other candidate stem; this tie-breaking occurred no more than three times per round. Agreement improved slightly across the rounds, as the standard deviation of the most variable indicator (“SAP Employee”) reduced from a maximum of 7.54 to 6.09 after Round 3. This is contrasted against the standard deviation of the most consistently-ranked indicator (“Non-English Fluency”) that remained at or near 0.79. Thus, the DELPHI Method successfully retained the diversity of expert panellists’ opinions while deriving a meaningful consensus that was functional for determining status allocation in this electronic network of practice.

3.2.3 *AllOurIdeas.org*

In order to address the potential limitations to the DELPHI Method from self-presentation motivations (as discussed immediately above in Section 3.2.2), an approach with significantly less bias was sought. AllOurIdeas.org (hereafter, just AOI) – rooted in mathematical sociology – is such a device.

Devised through a collaboration of Google and Princeton University, this tool aims to identify through crowdsourcing (i.e., collective solution) the answer to a single question. The researcher provides a stem question (e.g., “Which is the best flavour of ice cream?”) and a set of seed solutions (e.g., “Chocolate”, “Rum Raisin”, “Pistachio”, “Vanilla”); the tool additionally includes a feature for user-defined responses (i.e., write-in votes), which the designer can disable. Participants are presented with the question of interest and a randomised pair of solutions between which they must choose; an “I can’t decide” option is available should no solution be suitable to the participant. Each option (x) can be matched with each alternative (y) such that the number of possible pairs (x, y) is $\frac{z}{2} \times (z-1)$ where (z) is the number of different solution seeds. For additional probability analyses and explanations, consult Salganik & Levy (2012).

The result of an AllOurIdeas.org test is the probability that each seed would “win” in a pairing versus any random alternative seed, ranging from never (0) to always (1). Each seed enters the tournament with a win probability of 0.5; each subsequent head-to-head success/defeat then increases or decreases this likelihood. The AllOurIdeas.org output rank-orders seeds by probability. In addition to seed probability, the primary data yielded is the number of votes cast; no other individual or identifying information is collected (unless as matched with personalised URLs to previously-, externally-gathered data). The system additionally captures some voting behavioural information such as geographic distribution (as captured passively by IP address), number of unique sessions per day, and word cloud of user-defined ideas.

3.3 QUANTITATIVE MEASURES

3.3.1 *Panel Data*

Data were requested from SAP for all individual members of the SAP Community Network who earned at least one point in the Contributor Recognition Program during the Contest Year 2010-11 (i.e., from 1 August 2010 through 31 July 2011, inclusive). This sample enumerated $N = 8091$ cases. Later, a second panel of performance data for Contest Year 2009-10 and Lifetime was requested. SCN indexes members according to both a username and a unique code number (“SAPID”); data are not complete for all variables for all individuals because the 2010-11 and pre-2010 lists did not match exactly.

3.3.2 *Indicator Variables: Ascribed Status Characteristics*

3.3.2.1 *Gender*

SAP Community Network members’ gender was identified using a variety of sources. A member-provided photo on his/her dedicated SCN profile, linked Twitter bio, and/or connected LinkedIn profile served as the primary sources of gender information. Second, the baby name databases at Namepedia (<http://www.namepedia.org>) and BehindtheName (<http://www.behindthename.com/>) were consulted, testing both first names and the name in gestalt. Given that some names can be used for both genders, the photo and database sources were combined where possible. A random sampling of individuals who provided photos and whose names were recorded in the baby name databases indicates that the name lookup has an acceptable error rate.

The androgyny and/or neutrality of monikers are common in names originating from the Indian sub-Continent (particularly South India) and China. In order to address this issue, a sample of native speakers and second-generation speakers of Arabic, Hindi, and Chinese – all who had experience living and working in India, Bangladesh, or China and the United States or the United Kingdom – were asked to identify the gender of a sub-sample of gender-neutral names. Although all judges were provided with the entire sub-sample ($n = 2892$), they reported genders for only those names with which they had direct experience. The Chinese names posed additional difficulties due to the lack of pinyin characters; Chinese names transcribed for English may transpose unintentionally the first name and surname. Although it was considered to remove altogether the Chinese sample ($n = 323$ or 4%), the other value contributed by this data outweighed the risk of a gender-identification error; thus, the data remain in the sample. The judges' gender identifications were combined with the information from the photos and the baby name databases, such that one result per individual was recorded.

In keeping with prior art, males are indicated as “1” and females as “0”. This dataset does not recognise transgendered individuals, and represents as “.” those individuals whose gender could not be determined conclusively through any of the above methods, who totalled $n = 203$ (2.51%).

3.3.2.2 Geographic Location

Part of an individual's profile registers in which country she is working. This location might be different from both his/her nationality (i.e., “passport country”) and his/her genealogical origin – a situation termed the “Third Culture” phenomenon (Brandenburger & Balebuff, 1996; Pollock & van Reken, 2009). Following Bianchi, Kang, and Stewart's (2012) argument, the present data are coded for business regional

designation: US and Canada (North America), Europe Middle East and Africa, Asia Pacific Japan, and Latin America and Caribbean. Half (50.5%) of valid cases originate from Asia Pacific Japan, reflecting the large contingents from India and China. Conversely, 4.0% of the valid sample registered in Latin America and the Caribbean.

3.3.3 Indicator Variables: Achieved Status Characteristics

3.3.3.1 Tenure

The concept of organisational tenure was operationalized as SAP Community Network membership duration. SCNTenure is a continuous variable calculated from an individual's Join Date until the end of the last whole Contest Year in the study period, 31 July 2011. The unit "days" would have represented the most detail and reflected that performance recognition accrues daily. However, the resultant range caused its scaling to be incompatible with the other variables'. Thus, when necessary, SCNTenure was converted to "years" by dividing registered days by 365.2425 (i.e., the number of days per year in the Gregorian (reformed) calendar).

3.3.3.2 Employer Type

Different firms have varied and complex relationships with SAP. Partners have a co-opetitive relationship (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1996) that combines competition and cooperation; Customers have a more traditional, sales-driven relationship; University Alliances instruct using the products; and Independents have no relationship (beyond producer-user). The binary coding processes recorded a firm described as both Partner and Customer as Partner because that relationship is both more enduring and more difficult to confirm; this same approach was taken if Customer and Independent employer information occurred, favouring Customer as the

more informative relationship for research purposes. More than one-quarter (28.0%) of the sample worked for a company with an alternative, academic, or otherwise unknown relationship to SAP.

3.3.3.3 Accolades (viz. Conference Presenter)

Throughout each year, SAP organises many face-to-face meetings targeted at various organisational ecosystem players, including customers (i.e., SAPphire NOW) and developers (i.e., DKOM). The largest and most important event is the annual TechEd conference, held during Q4 sequentially in four geographic hubs (North America, EMEA, Bangalore, and Shanghai). TechEd includes a range of opportunities for SCN member participation. For example, InnoJam is a 30-hour “hackathon,” during which enthusiasts and SAP experts collaborate to develop solutions to real business cases; it culminates in the one-hour DemoJam, when finalists and their inventions developed using SAP software compete for the top prize and international recognition (see Appendix 14). Similar to the selection process for the Academy of Management annual meeting, SAP Community Network members submit proposals for sessions that they desire to lead during the TechEd conferences. Successful presenters must possess sufficient expert knowledge and professional reputation to draw significant attendance to their events; selection requires a critical amount of visibility and subsequently confers greater visibility and prestige – i.e., status. Therefore, presenting at SAP conferences is a clear indicator of achievement; it had a final DELPHI rank of 6 and an AllOurIdeas.org rank of 8.

In the present sample, SCN participants were coded for the number of conference activities in which they were involved, ranging from 0 to 5; then, this count was converted to a binary yes/no (coded “1” and “0”, respectively) variable. Only 238 (9.5%) individuals in the sample participated in this manner at TechEd 2010-11.

3.3.4 Indicator Variables: Performance

3.3.4.1 Contributor Recognition Program (CRP)

The CRP was created within the first year of SCN's existence as an incentive for the highest performing (i.e., most active in the production of the best quality content) participants. Each knowledge item created – document, weblog, wiki article, discussion post, video, podcast, code sample, and eLearning material – earns points (see the award table in Appendix 10); contributions come in many formats, including text and rich media. A fixed point value (ranging from two to 300, as published in an online guide) is assigned to each contribution; personal (e.g., “rant”) blogs receive no points unless categorised under a relevant, community content topic. “Shares”, “likes”, and “ratings” add quality points, known as “Feedback”, to a user's quantitative score. Thus, one's total score is a composite of purely quantitative contribution plus qualitative bonus points for perceived quality content. Originating authors can recognise “correct” and “helpful” answers with 10 and five points, respectively. Site Moderators can award bonus points for exceptional contributions and other types of activity (including responding to the annual survey, hosting face-to-face workshops, and attending conferences). Points totals are calculated on a rolling 12-month basis, and “Lifetime Points” earned since registration date also are tallied; both scores appear on the “Reputation” tab of an individual member's profile (see Appendix 7).

Active Contributors are those who have earned at least 250 points in the previous 12 months. In the present research, activity is delimited at inactive (<100), marginal (100-249), bronze (250-499), silver (500-1499), gold (1500-2499), and platinum (2500+) levels; these badges – and the number of points required to reach the next level – appear both on an individual's profile and next to his name and contributions (see Appendix 13). Badges identify SAP employees, SCN Moderators, and SAP

Mentors; from 2013, even more badges will be created as part of a gamification (McGonigal, 2011) program. A live “ticker” of an individual’s point-earning activity scrolls on the profile’s “Reputation” tab, whereas all participation scrolls on the “Activity” tab. The same information also is available by hovering over an individual’s username anywhere on the site – increasing visibility and, thus, status. A fixed 12-month period from August 1 of one year through July 31 of the following year is demarcated as the “Contest Year”, after which the three highest-scoring members per subject area are named as “SCN Topic Leaders”. A live-updated table ranking SCN members by total overall points is always highly visible on the site, and the top five power users (“Top Contributors”) per community area receive special identification in a live widget atop the subject space (reproduced in Appendix 11). Once annually, the most active companies are identified similarly to top performing individuals; for example, Partners earn the SAP Pinnacle Award. Contest Year awards and other forms of recognition are presented at the SAP “TechEd” annual conferences occurring in Q4.

3.3.4.1.1 Points in Contest Year 2010-11

Points in contest year 2010-11 is a continuous variable of the total points an individual earned in the Contributor Recognition Program for the 12-month period from 1 August 2010 through 31 July 2011, inclusive. Although SCN considers “active” participation to meet or exceed 250 points per year, as outlined above the present research includes both marginally active and inactive members in order to capture members who have recently joined the community, experts (especially SAP Mentors who are more active offline than they are online), and members who previously were much more active but who had not participated to that level in this year.

3.3.4.1.2 Points in Contest Year 2009-10

As above, Points in Contest Year 2009-10 is a continuous variable of the total points an individual earned in the Contributor Recognition Program (as above) for the 12-month period from 1 August 2009 through 31 July 2010, inclusive. Together, these are the last two complete Contest Years for which data were available.

3.3.4.1.3 Lifetime Points Pre-2009

Starting in March 2012, the SCN Collaboration Team responsible for recognition systems within community governance altered the date range from the fixed Contest Year to a rolling 12-month period. Performance tables previously highlighted active contributors each month as compared with others' over the previous year, not just August-July. As a result of this continual reset, a new variable now captures all points earned since the registration date. Lifetime Points is a continuous variable of the total points an individual earned in the Contributor Recognition Program from the user's SCN Join Date through 31 July 2011, inclusive.

Given that Lifetime Points includes the totals for the two Contest Years studied, an additional variable was calculated for Lifetime Points earned from Join Date through 31 July 2009, inclusive. This new variable is an indicator of performance capacity that is independent of current activity; therefore, the present research can identify influencers whose reputation supports their status as SAP Mentor, SAP Mentor Alumnus, or SCN Moderator even if their current performance has waned. Thus, as a measure of reputation, Lifetime Points pre-2009 is expected to be positively associated with status gain.

3.3.4.2 *Conversion of Form*

Although points earned is a continuous variable, the ranges (1 to 16653) were so large compared with the other variables' that comparison became difficult. Instead, continuous points were converted into six ordinal chunks according to the Active Contributor Badges described above. Then, consistent with the methodological norm whereby Likert scales are treated as continuous data, the badges were treated as continuous Performance.

Table 1: Performance 2010-11

	Frequency	Percent
Inactive	210	8.4
Marginal	1037	41.5
Bronze	582	23.3
Silver	490	19.6
Gold	106	4.2
Platinum	73	2.9
<i>N</i>	2498	99.9 [†]

[†]Percentages do not total 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 2: Performance 2009-10

	Frequency	Percent
Inactive	958	38.4
Marginal	570	22.8
Bronze	432	17.3
Silver	380	15.2
Gold	89	3.6
Platinum	69	2.8
<i>N</i>	2498	100.1 [†]

[†]Percentages do not total 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 3: Performance Pre-2009

	Frequency	Percent
Inactive	1176	47.1
Marginal	242	9.7
Bronze	248	9.9
Silver	406	16.3
Gold	152	6.1
Platinum	274	11.0
<i>N</i>	2498	100.1 [†]

[†]Percentages do not total 100.0 due to rounding.

3.3.5 Outcome Variables: Status

3.3.5.1 SAP Mentor

“The SAP Mentor Initiative identifies and provides special status to exceptional and high-value members of the larger SAP Ecosystem,” (Finnern, 2011a; emphasis added). Similar to the Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) and the Oracle Technology Network ACE programs, SAP Mentors number approximately 120 from 2.8 million registered SCN members total and represent an exclusive user sub-group that is privileged with access to SAP products and practices and potentially may shape their development. SAP Mentors’ primary purposes are engagement, innovation, and advocacy (Finnern, 2012a). The SAP Mentor “wolfpack” is highly visible both online, with differentiation ranging from a dedicated profile badge to a separate knowledge space, and offline, with the adoption of the artefact of the personalised rugby shirt to highlight them in a crowd (see Appendix 12). As both the DELPHI Method and the AllOurIdeas.org investigation confirmed, SAP Mentors are a high status group.

New SAP Mentors are announced twice yearly, in March and September. Candidates are self- or peer-nominated, and admission is highly selective; an average 10% of candidates are accepted in each cycle (Finnern, 2012b). Chief Community Evangelist Mark Finnern and representatives from SAP governance and current SAP Mentors evaluate each candidate for his or her potential and actual contributions towards SAP's strategic goals and engagement with the SAP Community Network on the platform and via other social media (primarily Twitter). The disclosed criteria (Finnern, 2011a) for SAP Mentorship are:

- Hands-on expert in an SAP product or service
- Collaborative attitude
- Good communicator
- Preferably working at a partner or customer of SAP
- Interested in improving products and services of SAP as well as the relationship of SAP with its customers, partners and prospects
- Proactive engagement

If you don't hit all 6 points, you can compensate by being exceptional in the other 5.

Although SAP Mentors are identified from all roles within the SAP ecosystem, Finnern maintains a distribution at roughly 30% each Partners, Customers, and Independent Consultants, and 10% SAP employees. Priority is given to candidates who meet criteria of expertise, product solutions, regional needs, and diversity; extra weight is applied to candidacies promoted by existing SAP Mentors. Therefore (Finnern, 2012c):

Not all SAP Mentors are super active on SCN ... activity on SCN is an important factor in the selection process, but not the only or the deciding factor of whether someone becomes an SAP Mentor or not. After all we are not SCN Mentors, but SAP Mentors. The larger ecosystem of SAP goes way beyond SCN. [SAP Mentors] reflect that.

In addition to the above-described selectivity and exclusive access, other benefits accrue to SAP Mentorship, including sponsored conference participation and discounted products and training. Thus, status as a SAP Mentor is highly desirable.

In the present dataset, SAP Mentorship was captured as a binary variable where “1” indicates service during the Contest Year 2010-11 (i.e., from 1 August 2010 through 31 July 2011, inclusive), and “0” indicates no such activity.

3.3.5.2 SCN Moderator

As part of an electronic network of practice’s voluntary membership and generalized exchange ethos, these groups primarily are self-governing. In SAP Community Network, the SCN Moderators serves as the executive committee. These volunteers have demonstrated both subject expertise and substantial knowledge of the “SCN Rules of Engagement” by which SCN members agree to abide (Schneider, 2011). SAP awards this privileged position to SCN Moderators who have the authority to encourage and to reward appropriate behaviour, and to identify for sanctioning unethical or illegal behaviour that threatens the functioning of the SCN (see Appendix 9). SCN Moderators are active across the SCN knowledge spaces including blogs, wikis, and fora, and they are made visible with special badges on their profiles. Selection proceeds similarly to the SAP Mentors’ process as described above; however, Moderators enter and leave the program continuously, and SCN Moderators who left in good standing may rejoin at any point.

Evidence from the DELPHI Method and the AllOurIdeas.org polling reveals that SCN Moderators enjoy high status within the SAP Community Network; the present dataset reflects this conclusion with a binary variable (whereby “1” indicates SCN Moderator service at some point and of any duration throughout the 2010-11 Contest Year).

3.3.5.3 SCN Topic Leader

SAP Community Members who demonstrate significant expertise in one topic per Contest Year are recognised through a league table of SCN Topic Leaders. Specifically, the three individuals who earn the most points in the Contributor Recognition Program (see Appendix 10) within one topic area (e.g., ABAP, Scripting Languages, or Japanese) are identified in person at the annual conference and highlighted online. This initiative intends to recognise the audience that SCN Topic Leaders' contributions attract and the influence that they wield. Knowledge items produced by SCN Topic Leaders spark conversations, which include SAP's directorate. According to both the DELPHI procedure and the AllOurIdeas.org survey, individuals identified as SCN Topic Leaders rank highly among their fellow SCN members.

Individuals whose focused contributions during the Contest Year 2010-11 earned them recognition as SCN Topic Leaders were coded as "1" in the dataset, and all others were coded as "0".

3.3.5.4 Status Overall Index

An overall index variable was created from the above dependent variables. Individuals who achieved any of the types of status earned a "1" on the overall index; everyone else earned a "0".

3.4 DATA PREPARATION & PROCESSING

3.4.1 *Missing Values Analysis*

A Missing Values Analysis (MVA) revealed that more than one third (37.3%) of cases did not have CY2010-11 Performance data, more than one half (59.2) were without CY2009-10 Performance data, and nearly two-thirds (60.5%) could not calculate Performance before CY2009-10. Results appear in Table 4, below.

A comparison of the total sample with the valid sample after listwise deletion (Table 5, below) reveals that retaining the larger *N* compresses the means of the Performance variables except pre-2009, and all of their standard deviations. Therefore, listwise deletion of cases with incomplete information is appropriate.

Table 4: Missing Values Analysis (MVA)

	N	Missing		No. of Extremes ^a	
		Count	Percent	Low	High
Gender	7888	203	2.5		
North American Region	8091	0	.0		
Europe Middle East Africa Region	8091	0	.0		
Asia Pacific Japan Region	8091	0	.0		
Latin America Caribbean Region	8091	0	.0		
Tenure	7154	937	11.6	0	221
SAP Employee	8091	0	.0		
Partner Employee	8091	0	.0		
Customer Employee	8091	0	.0		
Independent Employee	8091	0	.0		
Other / Unknown Employee	8091	0	.0		
Conference Speaker 2010-11	8091	0	.0		
Performance 2010-11	5070	3021	37.3	0	142
Performance 2009-10	3301	4790	59.2	0	105
Performance pre-2009	3199	4892	60.5	0	104
Status Index Overall	8091	0	.0		
SCN Topic Leader 2010-11	8091	0	.0		
SCN Moderator 2010-11	8091	0	.0		
SAP Mentor 2010-11	8091	0	.0		

^a Number of cases outside the range (Mean – 2*SD, Mean + 2*SD).

Table 5: MVA Summary of Estimated Means & Standard Deviations

Means

	Performance 2010-11	Performance 2009-10	Performance pre-2009	Tenure
Listwise	511.86	422.67	1090.73	1365.17
All Values	412.58	408.41	1134.41	1139.07

Standard Deviations

	Performance 2010-11	Performance 2009-10	Performance pre-2009	Tenure
Listwise	1002.81	918.13	3138.85	615.48
All Values	799.72	867.42	3119.33	704.04

However, listwise deletion of cases is not without some loss of integrity.

SCN indexes member profiles with a unique code number (“User ID”), which became the key variable. Cross-referencing User ID, full name, account type, employer, and other demographic information made possible the identification and then merging of duplicate entries for the same individual. In contrast, there are 337 participants named “Satish Kumar” and with different User IDs, registration dates, and employers. These entries could not be disregarded as redundant, and so these participants remained in the sample. After the additional removal of known duplicates, the final valid listwise sample size reduced to 2498.

3.4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Tenure	.00	3198	1374.97	620.55	.27	.05	-.42	.10
Performance 2010-11	.00	5.00	1.79	1.16	.72	.05	.14	.10
Performance 2009-10	.00	5.00	1.31	1.35	.81	.05	-.20	.10
Performance pre-2009	.00	5.00	1.58	1.79	.68	.05	-.96	.10
<i>N</i> (listwise) = 2498								

The measures of skewness and kurtosis are within ± 1 value of 0, revealing that the distribution shape is acceptable.

Given that $N > 2000$, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality is appropriate. The K-S test is a nonparametric assessment for continuous probability distributions of the discrepancy between a given reference sample (e.g., normal, Poisson, exponential) and the empirical sample (Corder & Foreman, 2009). The null hypothesis (H_0) presumes that the samples were drawn from the sample distribution; a significant test statistic indicates that the assumption of normality should be rejected.

Table 7: Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Tenure	.04	2498	.00
Performance 2010-11	.25	2498	.00
Performance 2009-10	.22	2498	.00
Performance pre-2009	.28	2498	.00

^a Lilliefors Significance Correction

Results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality indicate that none of the continuous variable data represent normally distributed samples. However, the Normal Q-Q plots for Tenure and Performance Average (representing all three time periods) reveal that deviation from normal is not practically significant.

Figure 5: Normal Q-Q Plot of Tenure

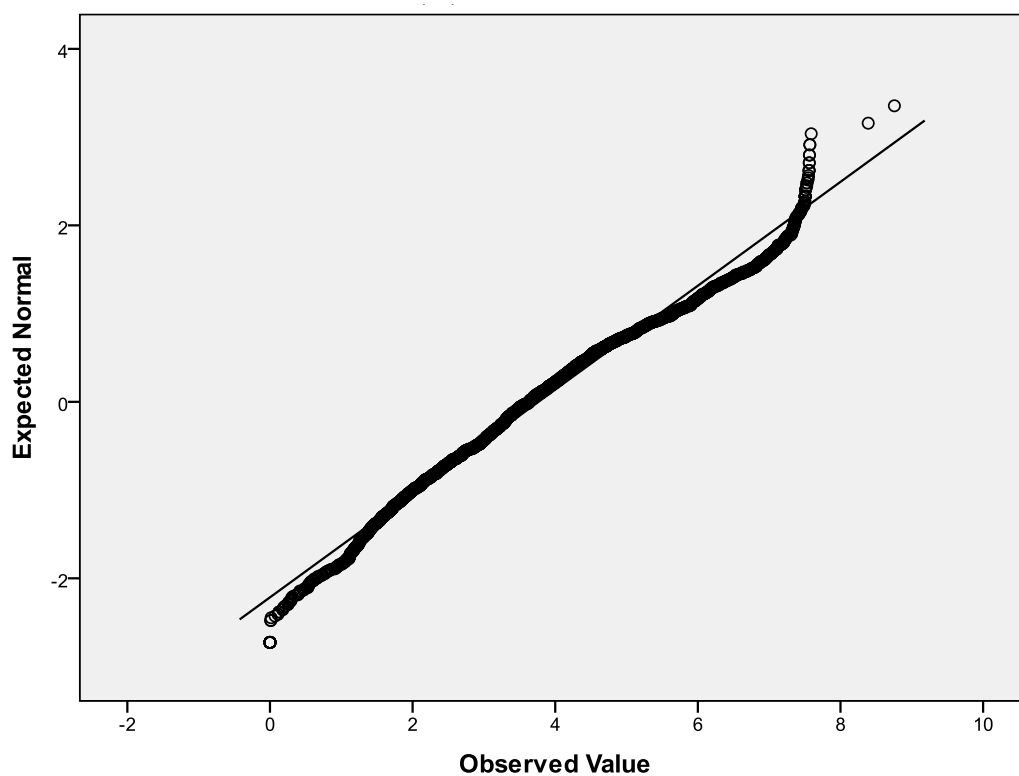
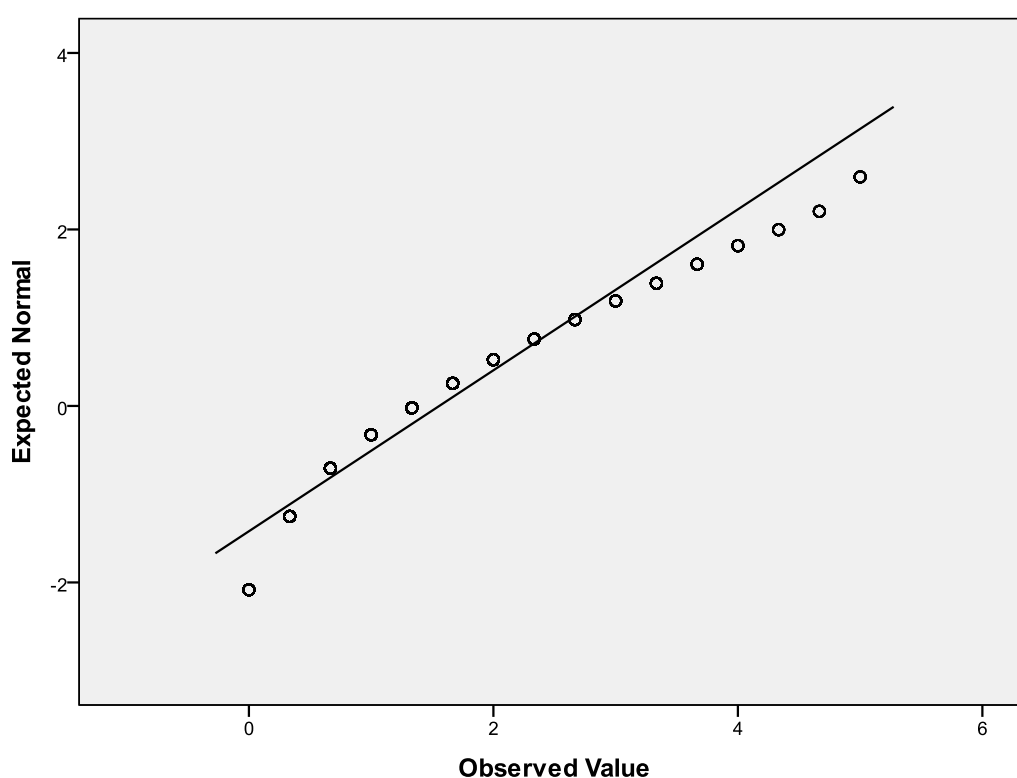


Figure 6: Normal Q-Q Plot of Performance, Average



Therefore, in order to access parametric models and to preserve the interpretability of results that closely matches reality, the continuous data will be considered to be normally distributed.

The frequency tables (Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10) report that women comprise a greater than typical proportion of SCN membership (12.6% to the industry average of less than 10%). Approximately half of the sample (50.5%) is registered in the Asia Pacific Japan business region, primarily India and China; roughly equal proportions participate from North America and EMEA (20.4% and 25.1%, respectively). Approximately one third (32.4%) of participants are employed by SAP; Partner employees comprise the next largest subgroup (28.0%) while Customer employees total 23.0% of the sample. A significant portion of the sample (28.0%) either declined to report their employers or worked for an employer whose relationship to SAP could not be identified, including some academic institutions.

Table 8: Frequency Distributions, Indicator Variables

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	315	12.6
	Male	2183	87.4
Region	Europe Middle East Africa (EMEA)	627	25.1
	North America (NAmer)	510	20.4
	Asia Pacific Japan (APJ)	1262	50.5
	Latin American Caribbean (LAC)	99	4.0
Employer ^a	SAP	809	32.4
	Partner	700	28.0
	Customer	581	23.3
	Independent	84	3.4
	Other / Academic / Unknown	699	28.0
Conference Speaker 2010-11	Yes, one or more times	238	9.5
	No, never	2260	90.5

Valid N = 2498

^a Percentages total > 100% due to multiple categories reported.

The participation of SAP electronic network of practice members in the offline role of conference presenters follows the law of rare events (i.e., the Poisson distribution) such that 90.5% of the sample did not feature at the major annual in-person event, although conference attendance rates (over 15,000 delegates each year) demonstrate that a significant subsample attended as non-presenters. At the opposite extreme, less than 0.03% of the sample presented five times.

Table 9: Frequency Distributions, Outcome Variables

	Frequency	Percent of Total Sample	Percent of Status Holders
Status Index Overall			
One or more forms	413	16.5	100.0
None	2085	83.5	
	Yes	73	2.9
	No	2425	97.1
SAP Mentor 2010-11			
SCN Moderator 2010-11			
	Yes	310	12.4
	No	2168	87.6
SCN Topic Leader 2010-11			
	Yes	98	3.9
	No	2400	96.1

Valid N = 2498

Table 10: Frequency Distributions, Types of Status

Type of Status	Frequency	Percent of Total Sample	Percent of All Status Holders
SAP Mentor Only	39	1.6	9.4
SAP Mentor & SCN Moderator	24	1.0	5.8
SAP Mentor & SCN Topic Leader	6	0.2	1.5
SAP Mentor & SCN Moderator & SCN Topic Leader	4	0.2	1.0
SCN Moderator Only	252	10.1	61.0
SCN Moderator & SCN Topic Leader	30	1.2	7.3
SCN Topic Leader Only	58	2.3	14.0
No Status	2085	83.5	.
TOTAL	2498	100.1 ^a	100.0

^a Percentage total > 100.0 due to rounding.

The below test (Table 11) indicates that only the categorical dummy variable for the Asia Pacific Japan region follows a true binomial distribution. However, binomial measures will be used because of the nature of the variables and their coding schemes.

Table 11: Binomial Distribution Test

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender	Group 1	Male	2183	.87	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	Female	315	.13		
	Total		2498	1.00		
EMEA Regional Dummy	Group 1	Others	1871	.75	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	EMEA	627	.25		
	Total		2498	1.00		
NAmer Regional Dummy	Group 1	NAmer	510	.20	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	Others	1988	.80		
	Total		2498	1.00		
APJ Regional Dummy	Group 1	Others	1236	.49	.50	.62 ^a
	Group 2	APJ	1262	.51		
	Total		2498	1.00		
LAC Regional Dummy	Group 1	Others	2399	.96	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	LAC	99	.04		
	Total		2498	1.00		
SAP Employee	Group 1	Non-SAP Employee	1689	.68	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	SAP Employee	809	.32		
	Total		2498	1.00		
Partner Employee	Group 1	Non-Partner Employee	1798	.72	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	Partner Employee	700	.28		
	Total		2498	1.00		
Customer Employee	Group 1	Non-Customer Employee	1917	.77	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	Customer Employee	581	.23		
	Total		2498	1.00		
Independent Employee	Group 1	Non-Independent	2414	.97	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	Independent	84	.03		
	Total		2498	1.00		
Unknown Employee	Group 1	Other Employee	699	.28	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	Non-Other Employee	1799	.72		
	Total		2498	1.00		
Conference Speaker Dummy	Group 1	Never	2260	.90	.50	.00 ^a
	Group 2	One or more times	238	.10		
	Total		2498	1.00		

a. Based on Z Approximation.

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (2- tailed)
Status Index	Group 1	None	2085	.83	.50	.00 ^a
Overall	Group 2	One or more forms	413	.17		
	Total		2498	1.00		
SAP Mentor	Group 1	No	2425	.97	.50	.00 ^a
2010-11	Group 2	Yes	73	.03		
	Total		2498	1.00		
SCN Moderator	Group 1	No	2188	.88	.50	.00 ^a
2010-11	Group 2	Yes	310	.12		
	Total		2498	1.00		
Topic Leader	Group 1	No	2400	.96	.50	.00 ^a
2010-11	Group 2	Yes	98	.04		
	Total		2498	1.00		

a. Based on Z Approximation.

Below (Table 12) is the final list of variables involved in the analyses.

Table 12: Table of Variables

Variable Name	Variable Label	Type	Range	Function
Gender	GENDER	Binary (Nominal)	0-1	Indicator
North American Region	NAMER	Binary Dummy	0-1	Indicator
Europe Middle East Africa Region	EMEA	Binary Dummy	0-1	Indicator
Asia Pacific Japan Region	APJ	Binary Dummy	0-1	Indicator
Latin America Caribbean Region	LAC	Binary Dummy	0-1	Indicator
Tenure	SCNTENURE	Continuous (Scale)		Indicator
SAP Employee	SAPEMP	Binary Dummy	0-1	Indicator
Partner Employee	PTNREMP	Binary Dummy	0-1	Indicator
Customer Employee	CUSTEMP	Binary Dummy	0-1	Indicator
Independent Employee	INDEP	Binary Dummy	0-1	Indicator
Other / Unknown Employee	OTHERUNKNOWN	Binary Dummy	0-1	Indicator
Conference Speaker 2010-11	CONFSPKRBIN	Binary (Nominal)	0-1	Indicator
Performance 2010-11	BADGES201011	Continuous (Scale)	0-5	Mediator
Performance 2009-10	BADGES200910	Continuous (Scale)	0-5	Mediator
Performance pre-2009	BADGESPRE2009	Continuous (Scale)	0-5	Mediator
Status Index Overall	SIOVERALL	Binary (Nominal)	0-1	Outcome
SCN Topic Leader 2010-11	TLEAD	Binary (Nominal)	0-1	Outcome
SCN Moderator 2010-11	MODERATOR	Binary (Nominal)	0-1	Outcome
SAP Mentor 2010-11	MENT1011	Binary (Nominal)	0-1	Outcome

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF RQ0 & RQ1

“The only way to bushwhack a path out of the darkness is with a good, solid measuring stick.” - Amanda Ripley

4.1 PURPOSE

The following chapter will examine the purpose, origin, composition, and function of a status hierarchy in an electronic network of practice. One way to expand status theory into this novel context is to apply established methods from other disciplines to aid the discovery of new facts. The present research imported the DELPHI Method (from decision science and negotiation) and AllOurIdeas.org (from mathematical sociology) in order to achieve these objectives. The DELPHI Method was introduced in §3.2.2, and AllOurIdeas.org was explained in §3.2.3.

4.2 The DELPHI Method

Participants had seven (7) days to answer the first survey. Data from Round 1 comprised a score of 1 to 23 (1 being the highest) for each stem from each participant; Round 1 featured an additional discussion on the difference between “status” and “expertise”. The rank scores were then averaged and the stems re-ranked. Tied scores were broken by considering their range and standard deviation of scores for each stem, whereby the least-varying “won” the place and the next least followed. Given that the final ranking would be considered in chunks (e.g., Top 4 vs. Bottom 4, Second 4 vs. Second-to-Last 4), this method permitted differentiation without introducing false distinctions; this procedure was explained to DELPHI participants. Round 1 yielded the following results:

Table 13: DELPHI Method, Ranking after One Round

Status Indicator	DELPHI RANK
SAP Mentor Role	1
SCN Moderator Role	2
Top Contributor Award	3
Conference / Event Presenter	4
SAP Mentor Alumnus	5
Featured on SCN Homepage	6
Thought Leader Award	7
Points Total	8
SAP Employee	9
“Good Citizen” Behaviors	10
Work Experience (Number of Years)	11
Tenure in SCN (i.e., From Date Joined)	12
English Fluency	13
Badges	14
Certifications	15
Job Level / Occupational Title	16
Top Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP)	17
User Group Membership	18
Number of Successful Projects	19
Employee at Partner Org.	20
(Formal) Education	21
Geographical Area	22
Non-English Fluency	23

In Round 2, these results were presented to the DELPHI group (“Below are indicators of status in the SAP Community Network, descending from most to least relevant, as judged by your expert peers in Round 1.”), who subsequently were surveyed as to what surprised them about the same. Then, respondents were asked about the same prompt as in Round 1, introduced by “Considering your expert group's responses...”; in addition, DELPHI experts were asked to describe both the “typical”

and the “ideal” SCN member, “referring to relevant status characteristics if desired”. The survey period was six (6) days. Data were analysed as above. Despite 90% of experts reporting that Round 1’s list reflected their SCN experience “reasonably well” to “100%”, 70% of the status indicators moved at least one (1) position. The average adjustment was two (2) positions, with one indicator – “Tenure in SCN” - downgraded by seven (7) ranks. In addition to “Tenure”, “English Fluency” lost relevance significantly; conversely, “SAP Mentor Alumnus” and “Badges” gained relevance significantly.

After Round 2, participants were asked, “Compared with the ranking produced in Round 1, how well do you feel the Round 2 list of indicators signals status in the SCN?”. Responses indicated a reasonably good fit – ranging from “I totally agree with it” to “Almost perfect”. To ensure that the results reflected consensus, a third and final rank-order task was conducted over one week. The result reached reasonable stability: the top eight (8) remained unchanged; the bottom five (5) had only one shuffle; the largest boost went to “Number of Successful Projects”; and the greatest drop befell “Occupational Title” and “Points Total”. Using the quartile chunking described above, and considering respondent fatigue, the DELPHI ranking was closed after three rounds. The final order is as follows:

Table 14: DELPHI Method, Ranking after Three Rounds

Status Indicator	DELPHI RANK
SAP Mentor Role	1
SCN Moderator Role	2
SAP Mentor Alumnus	3
Top Contributor Award	4
Featured on SCN Homepage	5
Conference/Event Presenter	6
Thought Leader Award	7
Badges	8
SAP Employee	9
"Good Citizen" Behaviours	10
Points Total	11
Work Experience (Number of Years)	12
Certifications	13
Number of Successful Projects	14
Job Level / Occupational Title	15
English Fluency	16
User Group Membership	17
Topic Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP)	18
Tenure in SCN (i.e., From Date Joined)	19
Employee at Partner Org.	20
(Formal) Education	21
Geographical Area	22
Non-English Fluency	23

4.3 AllOurIdeas.org

Launched 21 July 2011, the present AllOurIdeas.org project (provided in Appendix 6) included the 23 status indicators from the DELPHI Method and one additional indicator, “Number of Blogs, Articles, etc. [posted on SCN]”, which a user submitted six weeks after the start. User submissions automatically were deactivated; that is, users could only join the solution space with active SCN Moderator approval. Four other stems were submitted: one nonsense text, two items that matched existing seed options (with which the voter had not yet been presented), and one mixed choice (“Expertise shown in evidently solved problems”, emphasis added). Given that “evidently solved” overlapped conceptually with “Number of Successful Projects” and that the difference between “status” and “expertise” is too complex for a binary choice design, this stem was excluded from the study.

The AllOurIdeas.org poll ran for approximately 14 months and received 937 votes across the 24 stems. The geographical distribution was concentrated heavily around SAP’s regional hubs in the US, Germany, India, Brazil, and Australia; no votes were recorded from either East Asia or Africa, although 69 locations that were unable to be identified could potentially originate in these regions. The results of the AllOurIdeas.org investigation are below:

Table 15: Comparison of AOI Score to DELPHI Final Rank

Status Indicator	AOI Score	RANK	Δ RANK
SAP Mentor Alumnus Role	86	1	2
SAP Mentor Role	82	2	-1
SCN Moderator Role	78	3	-1
#Blogs, Articles etc.	74	4	.
Top Contributor Award	72	5	-1
Thought Leader Award	68	6	1
Featured on SCN Homepage	66	7	-2
Conference/Event Presenter	64	8	-2
Badges	56	9	-1
SAP Employee	56	10	-1
Work Experience (Number of Years)	53	11	1
Number of Successful Projects	52	12	2
"Good Citizen" Behaviors	51	13	-3
Topic Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP)	45	14	4
Job Level / Occupational Title	45	15	0
Tenure in SCN	40	16	3
Employee at Partner Org.	37	17	3
Points Total	37	18	-7
Certifications	36	19	-6
User Group (e.g., ASUG) Membership	31	20	-3
(Formal) Education	30	21	0
Geographical Area	23	22	0
English Fluency	21	23	-7
Non-English Fluency	7	24	-1

Overall, the rank-ordering confirms the results of the DELPHI Method; barring the new seed, the top 8 best indicators of status still rank the highest. The greatest change from DELPHI to AllOurIdeas.org is significant depressions to “Points Total”, “Certifications”, and “English Fluency”. Such a result would be expected from a participant group from a meritocracy that is eager to communicate the differences among performance, expertise, and status and keen to demonstrate a global inclusiveness, a type of self-presentation bias. Given that AllOurIdeas.org captures explicit preferences, we would expect a test of implicit associations (cf. Greenwald et al., 1998) to reveal more reliance on ascribed and achieved characteristics, as expected from the literature.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS OF RQ2 & RQ3

“[Do not use] statistics as a drunken man uses a lamp-post, for support rather than illumination.” - Andrew Lang

5.1 PURPOSE

Chapter 4 established the functioning of a status hierarchy in the electronic network of practice, and also explored its legitimacy and consensus adoption. Continuing the theoretical development from that point, Chapter 5 will explore how status is allocated in an electronic network of practice and to whom. The best methods with which to examine these research questions and to address the hypotheses proposed is traditional correlational, linear regression, and logistic regression analyses.

5.2 CORRELATIONAL ANALYSES

Pearson's product-moment correlation ("Pearson's r ") analyses in Table 16 (below) reveal interesting patterns of linear relationships. Overall, performance in one year was significantly (all $p < .001$) related to performance in the previous year; 2010-11 correlated to both 2009-10 ($r = .50$) and pre-2009 ($r = .19$), and 2009-10 correlated to pre-2009 ($r = .44$). This result provides support for the widely-held belief that the best predictor of future performance is past performance.

Table 16: Pearson's Correlations

		PERFORMANCE 2010-11	PERFORMANCE 2009-10	PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	GENDER	North America Regional Dummy	EMEA Regional Dummy	APJ Regional Dummy	LAC Regional Dummy	SCN TENURE	SAP EMPLOYEE	PARTNER EMPLOYEE	CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	INDEPENDENT	OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	Conference Speaker 2010-11 Dummy	Status Index Overall 2010-11	SAP MENTOR 2010-11	SCN MODERATOR 2010-11	SCN TOPIC LEADER 2010-11
PERFORMANCE 2010-11	<i>r</i>	1	.50**	.19**	.00	.08**	.07**	-.15**	.06**	-.01	.12**	-.02	-.01	.02	-.13**	.18**	.40**	.21**	.26**	.41**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.00	.00	.98	.00	.00	.00	.00	.65	.00	.36	.61	.34	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
PERFORMANCE 2009-10	<i>r</i>	.50**	1	.44**	.03	.09**	.09**	-.12**	-.07**	.09**	.04*	.02	.00	.07**	-.09**	.15**	.35**	.22**	.27**	.25**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.00		.00	.17	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.04	.44	.83	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	<i>r</i>	.19**	.44**	1	.03	.07**	.07**	-.08**	-.11**	.34**	-.05**	.05*	.04	.06**	-.02	.13**	.24**	.17**	.19**	.12**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.00	.00		.09	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.03	.08	.00	.43	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
GENDER	<i>r</i>	.00	.03	.03	1	-.04*	.04	.00	.00	-.02	-.14**	.08**	.07**	.02	.04*	.02	-.03	.01	-.06**	.04*
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.98	.17	.09		.04	.05	.99	.87	.42	.00	.00	.00	.39	.03	.41	.11	.67	.00	.05

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N=2498

		PERFORMANCE 2010-11	PERFORMANCE 2009-10	PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	GENDER	North America Regional Dummy	EMEA Regional Dummy	APJ Regional Dummy	LAC Regional Dummy	SCN TENURE	SAP EMPLOYEE	PARTNER EMPLOYEE	CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	INDEPENDENT	OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	Conference Speaker 2010-11 Dummy	Status Index Overall 2010-11	SAP MENTOR 2010-11	SCN MODERATOR 2010-11	SCN TOPIC LEADER 2010-11
NAmer Regional Dummy	<i>r</i>	.08**	.09**	.07**	-.04*	1	-.29**	-.51**	-.10**	.04	.13**	-.15**	.02	-.04*	-.07**	.13**	.16**	.11**	.16**	.03
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.04		.00	.00	.00	.08	.00	.00	.39	.05	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.13
EMEA Regional Dummy	<i>r</i>	.07**	.09**	.07**	.04	-.29**	1	-.59**	-.12**	.11**	.15**	-.14**	-.06**	.01	-.09**	.07**	.11**	.05*	.10**	.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.05	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.82	.00	.00	.00	.02	.00	.30
APJ Regional Dummy	<i>r</i>	-.15**	-.12**	-.08**	.00	-.51**	-.59**	1	-.21**	-.09**	-.27**	.27**	.06**	.03	.14**	-.15**	-.24**	-.13**	-.23**	-.06**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.99	.00	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.09	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
LAC Regional Dummy	<i>r</i>	.06**	-.07**	-.11**	.00	-.10**	-.12**	-.21**	1	-.09**	.10**	-.08**	-.05**	-.02	-.01	-.03	.05**	.00	.06**	.04*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.87	.00	.00	.00		.00	.00	.00	.01	.45	.54	.12	.01	.95	.00	.03
SCN TENURE	<i>r</i>	-.01	.09**	.34**	-.02	.04	.11**	-.09**	-.09**	1	.15**	-.07**	-.02	.01	-.10**	.12**	.12**	.02	.13**	.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.65	.00	.00	.42	.08	.00	.00	.00		.00	.00	.29	.50	.00	.00	.00	.27	.00	.81

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N=2498

		PERFORMANCE 2010-11	PERFORMANCE 2009-10	PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	GENDER	North America Regional Dummy	EMEA Regional Dummy	APJ Regional Dummy	LAC Regional Dummy	SCN TENURE	SAP EMPLOYEE	PARTNER EMPLOYEE	CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	INDEPENDENT	OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	Conference Speaker 2010-11 Dummy	Status Index Overall 2010-11	SAP MENTOR 2010-11	SCN MODERATOR 2010-11	SCN TOPIC LEADER 2010-11
SAP EMPLOYEE	<i>r</i>	.12**	.04*	-.05**	-.14**	.13**	.15**	-.27**	.10**	.15**	1	-.43**	-.38**	-.13**	-.43**	.29**	.29**	-.05**	.38**	-.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.04	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.41
PARTNER EMPLOYEE	<i>r</i>	-.02	.02	.05*	.08**	-.15**	-.14**	.27**	-.08**	-.07**	-.43**	1	.34**	-.11**	-.39**	-.11**	-.13**	.04*	-.16**	-.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.36	.44	.03	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.05	.00	.43
CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	<i>r</i>	-.01	.00	.04	.07**	.02	-.06**	.06**	-.05**	-.02	-.38**	.34**	1	.02	-.28**	-.09**	-.07**	.07**	-.13**	.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.61	.83	.08	.00	.39	.00	.00	.01	.29	.00	.00		.24	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.08
INDEPENDENT	<i>r</i>	.02	.07**	.06**	.02	-.04*	.01	.03	-.02	.01	-.13**	-.11**	.02	1	-.12**	.02	.03	.15**	-.02	.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.34	.00	.00	.39	.05	.82	.09	.45	.50	.00	.00	.24		.00	.26	.22	.00	.42	.69
OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	<i>r</i>	-.13**	-.09**	-.02	.04*	-.07**	-.09**	.14**	-.01	-.10**	-.43**	-.39**	-.28**	-.12**	1	-.18**	-.18**	-.10**	-.19**	-.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.43	.03	.00	.00	.00	.54	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00	.92
Conference Speaker 2010-11 Dummy	<i>r</i>	.18**	.15**	.13**	.02	.13**	.07**	-.15**	-.03	.12**	.29**	-.11**	-.09**	.02	-.18**	1	.24**	.34**	.17**	.05**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.41	.00	.00	.00	.12	.00	.00	.00	.00	.26	.00		.00	.00	.00	.01

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N=2498

		PERFORMANCE 2010-11	PERFORMANCE 2009-10	PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	GENDER	North America Regional Dummy	EMEA Regional Dummy	APJ Regional Dummy	LAC Regional Dummy	SCN TENURE	SAP EMPLOYEE	PARTNER EMPLOYEE	CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	INDEPENDENT	OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	Conference Speaker 2010-11 Dummy	Status Index Overall 2010-11	SAP MENTOR 2010-11	SCN MODERATOR 2010-11	SCN TOPIC LEADER 2010-11
Status Index Overall 2010-11	<i>r</i> Sig. (2-tailed)	.40** .00	.35** .00	.24** .00	-.03 .11	.16** .00	.11** .00	-.24** .00	.05** .01	.12** .00	.29** .00	-.13** .00	-.07** .00	.03 .22	-.18** .00	.24** .00	1 .00	.39** .00	.85** .00	.45** .00
SAP MENTOR 2010-11	<i>r</i> Sig. (2-tailed)	.21** .00	.22** .00	.17** .00	.01 .67	.11** .00	.05* .02	-.13** .00	.00 .95	.02 .27	-.05** .01	.04* .05	.07** .00	.15** .00	-.10** .00	.34** .00	.39** .00	1 .00	.14** .00	.09** .00
SCN MODERATOR 2010-11	<i>r</i> Sig. (2-tailed)	.26** .00	.27** .00	.19** .00	-.06** .00	.16** .00	.10** .00	-.23** .00	.06** .00	.13** .00	.38** .00	-.16** .00	-.13** .00	-.02 .42	-.19** .00	.17** .00	.85** .00	.14** .00	1 .00	.14** .00
SCN TOPIC LEADER 2010-11	<i>r</i> Sig. (2-tailed)	.41** .00	.25** .00	.12** .00	.04* .05	.03 .13	.02 .30	-.06** .00	.04* .03	.01 .81	-.02 .41	-.02 .43	.04 .08	.01 .69	-.00 .92	.05** .01	.45** .00	.09** .00	.14** .00	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N=2498

Status overall (i.e., of any type) in 2010-11 was significantly positively related to performance at all three time intervals; the strongest association was during the same time period (2010-11 $r = .40, p < .001$) and declined with time (2009-10 $r = .35, p < .001$; pre-2009 $r = .24, p < .001$). This result is surprising: present high status is associated with performance two or more years previously. Unpacking status into its component types reveals interesting patterns of association. Given that Topic Leader 2010-11 is the result of ending the Contest Year as one of the top three contributors per subject area, the significant correlation between Performance 2010-11 and Topic Leader 2010-11 ($r = .41, p < .001$) is expected. What was hypothesised and follows from the previous observation is that Topic Leader 2010-11 was significantly correlated with both 2009-10 ($r = .25, p < .001$) and pre-2009 ($r = .12, p < .001$) performance. This association indicates that some previously high performers continue to top the tables.

SCN Moderator 2010-11 is strongly associated with higher performance across all time periods ($r = .26, .27$, and $.19$ with all $p < .001$, descending chronologically); the magnitude of this association is slightly larger for the previous year than for the present year. SAP Mentor demonstrates the same pattern ($r = .21, .22$, and $.17$ with all $p < .001$, descending chronologically). Compared with the trends for Status Overall and Topic Leader, these results collectively suggest that a lag effect of at least one year might act on the effect of performance on status of the SCN Moderator and SAP Mentor formats.

Gender was significantly associated neither with performance during any time period, nor with overall status. Moreover, there was no significant relationship between gender and presenting as a conference speaker in 2010-11. Further analysis of the component effects revealed no association between Gender and SAP Mentorship; a significant association of women and the SCN Moderator role ($r = -.06, p < .01$); and a

significant association of men and SCN Topic Leadership ($r = .04, p < .05$). This split result indicates that these three forms of status might reflect different types or indeed different pathways to achievement; this will be explored further with regression analyses.

In contrast to gender, tenure in SCN was significantly associated with both speaking at a conference in 2010-11 ($r = .12, p < .001$) and overall status ($r = .12, p < .001$). Notably, tenure was not significantly related to either acting as an SAP Mentor or earning recognition as a SCN Topic Leader; therefore, the effect on overall status was driven by the significant association between tenure and SCN Moderator service ($r = .13, p < .001$). This result indicates that duration of membership is important for SCN Moderators but irrelevant for SCN Topic Leadership (calculated only from the current Contest Year's performance standings) and for SAP Mentorship (awarded based on myriad time-independent criteria, including alignment with strategic goals). Tenure possibly increases knowledge of governance (i.e., capability) and investment in community welfare (i.e., willingness) for this service-type role; conversely, the achievement of status as an SCN Moderator at some point might decrease intention to quit the community-network. Regression analyses will explore further this association.

Overall, geographical region was significantly associated with performance. Registrants from North American and EMEA across all time periods had a small, positive relationship to performance (all $r < .10$, all $p < .001$). Conversely, residents of Asia Pacific Japan and Latin America Caribbean had small-to-moderate, negative relationships to performance ($-.15 < \text{all } r < -.06$; all $p < .001$) – except the 2010-11 Contest Year and Latin America and Caribbean, which experienced a positive relationship to performance ($r = .06, p < .001$). Conference Speaker in 2010-11 was significantly positively associated with North America and EMEA registration ($r = .13$ and $.07$, respectively; both $p < .001$), negatively associated with Asia Pacific Japan

residence ($r = -.15, p < .001$), and not significantly associated with Latin America and Caribbean regionality. In 2010-11, Latin American Caribbean once again bucked the general trend, reflecting a familiar pattern in the relationship between geographical region and status.

Similar to performance, status overall is positively associated with residence in North America and EMEA ($r = .16$ and $.11$, respectively; both $p < .001$) and negatively associated with residence in Asia Pacific Japan ($r = -.24, p < .001$), but positively associated with residence in Latin America Caribbean ($r = .05, p < .01$). This pattern remains consistent for SCN Moderator and SAP Mentor (excepting a non-significant association between Latin America and Caribbean and SAP Mentor). However, SCN Topic Leadership follows a different pattern in which North America and Europe Middle East and Africa have no significant relationship to status, yet Latin America Caribbean has a small, significant, positive association to this type of status ($r = .04, p < .05$). Although the presence of a Portuguese language topic might account for some of this effect, the anticipated domination of Chinese and Japanese language topics by registrants from the Asia Pacific Japan region contributed to a negative association ($r = -.06, p < .01$) there.

Employer type demonstrated non-uniform patterns of associations. Generally, Partner and Customer clung together and to the opposite of SAP. In 2010-11, only SAP and Other/Unknown were significantly associated with performance ($r = .12$ and $-.13$, respectively; both $p < .001$); that finding also held in 2009-10, with the addition of a positive association between Independent employer and performance ($r = .07, p < .001$). However, pre-2009 the pattern of associations was entirely different: SAP employment was negatively associated with performance ($r = -.05$) whereas employment through a Partner or Independent firm was positively associated with performance ($r = .05$ and $.06$, respectively; all $p < .05$), and Customer and

Other/Unknown firms had no significant association with performance. The effects of employer type on status will be examined in turn. First, Other/Unknown employer was significantly negatively related to overall status and to all forms of status (except SCN Topic Leadership, which was negatively associated but failed to reach statistical significance) ($-.19 < r < -.10$; all $p < .001$). In other words, information about employer type of any sort improved the association between employer and status achievement. Second, Independent employers had no significant relationship to status overall, SCN Moderators, or SCN Topic Leadership, but they were significantly positively related to SAP Mentorship ($r = .15, p < .001$). Then, Customer and Partner employers tended to have the same relationships as each other but the opposite relationships as SAP to status. Partner and Customer employers were significantly negatively related to overall status ($r = -.13$ and $-.07$, respectively; both $p < .001$) and to SCN Moderators ($r = -.16$ and $-.13$, respectively; both $p < .001$); significantly positively associated with SAP Mentorship ($r = .04$ and $.07$, respectively; both $p < .05$); and not significantly associated with SCN Topic Leadership. Conversely, SAP employment was positively associated with overall status ($r = .29, p < .001$) largely driven by a positive association with SCN Moderators ($r = .38, p < .001$), but significantly negatively associated with SAP Mentorship ($r = -.05, p < .01$) and not significantly related to SCN Topic Leadership.

Presenting at a conference in Contest Year 2010-11 was significantly positively related to performance in each time interval –not just during 2010-11 ($.13 < r < .18$, all $p < .001$) – and to status overall ($r = .24, p < .001$). Conference speakers in 2010-11 significantly overlapped with SAP Mentors ($r = .34, p < .001$), SCN Moderators ($r = .17, p < .001$), and SCN Topic Leaders ($r = .05, p < .01$). This similarity of behaviour confirms the results of the DELPHI and AllOurIdeas.org studies that highlighted Conference Speaker as a high status position behind only SAP Mentors, SCN Moderators, and SCN Topic Leaders.

5.3 REGRESSION ANALYSES

5.3.1 *Linear Regression*

The significant associations detailed above initial indications to be examined further through regression analyses of the antecedents of performance – that is, the potential predictive role of non-performance individual characteristics. This investigation was accomplished through simple linear regression (Table 17, below).

Regarding Performance pre-2009, the model was significant ($F = 45.74$, $df = 9$) and adequately accounted for variance ($R^2 = 0.16$). Asia Pacific Japan residents had 0.36 fewer ($B = -0.36$, $t = -4.27$, $p < .001$) and Latin America and Caribbean residents had 0.69 fewer ($B = -0.69$, $t = -3.83$, $p < .001$) badges than Europe Middle East and Africa residents. Every one year increase in tenure increased the number of badges earned by 0.35 ($B = 0.35$, $t = 17.45$, $p < .001$). Partner employees achieved 0.60 more badges ($B = 0.60$, $t = 6.60$, $p < .001$) than compared to SAP employees; Independent and Other/Unknown employees earned 0.84 and 0.52 more badges, respectively (all $t > 4$, all $p < .001$). Conference speakers in 2010-11 earned 0.71 more badges pre-2009 than did non-presenting others ($B = 0.71$, $t = 5.99$, $p < .001$).

During the next year (i.e., Contest Year 2009-10), Performance construction followed the same pattern and with the same magnitudes as pre-2009, with two exceptions. First, each additional one year of tenure now only increased earned badges by 0.05 ($B = 0.05$, $t = 3.14$, $p < .001$). Second, employment by an Other/Unknown firm was no longer a significant contributor to earned Performance ($B = -0.03$, $t = -0.48$, $p = 0.63$ *n.s.*). Overall, the model was significant ($F = 14.24$, $df = 9$) but accounted for only a small proportion of the variance ($R^2 = 0.05$).

In Contest Year 2010-11, the trend shifted. Asia Pacific Japan residents still had fewer badges than Europe Middle East and Africa residents ($B = -0.25$, $t = -4.35$, $p < .001$), but Latin America and Caribbean residents earned 0.25 more badges than did referent group members ($B = 0.25$, $t = 2.02$, $p < .05$). An increase of one year in tenure decreased performance by 0.03 badges ($B = -0.03$, $t = -2.12$, $p < .05$). The only employer type that significantly influenced performance was Other/Unknown, which detracted from badges earned by 0.23 ($B = -0.23$, $t = -3.79$, $p < .001$). Presenting at a conference remained a significant antecedent of performance ($B = 0.58$, $t = 7.14$, $p < .001$). The overall model represents a roughly equivalent fit to the previous years' models ($F = 15.36$, $df = 9$, $R^2 = 0.06$).

Table 17: Simple Linear Regression

	Performance 2010-11				Performance 2009-10				Performance Pre-2009			
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E. (B)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E. (B)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E. (B)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Non-Performance Correlates												
Gender	0.01	0.07	0.13	0.89	0.09	0.08	1.09	0.27	0.09	0.10	0.88	0.38
North America Region ^a	0.03	0.07	0.40	0.69	0.04	0.08	0.53	0.60	0.09	0.10	0.87	0.38
Asia Pacific Japan Region ^a	-0.25	0.06	-4.35	<.001***	-0.35	0.07	-5.06	<.001***	-0.36	0.09	-4.27	<.001***
Latin America Caribbean Region ^a	0.25	0.12	2.02	.04*	-0.53	0.14	-3.66	<.001***	-0.69	0.18	-3.83	<.001***
Tenure	-0.03	0.01	-2.12	.03*	0.05	0.02	3.14	<.001***	0.35	0.02	17.45	<.001***
Partner Employee ^b	0.00	0.06	0.04	0.97	0.21	0.07	2.87	<.001***	0.60	0.09	6.60	<.001***
Customer Employee ^b	-0.04	0.06	-0.75	0.45	-0.03	0.07	-0.49	0.62	0.16	0.09	1.86	.06^
Independent Employee ^b	0.07	0.13	0.56	0.58	0.57	0.15	3.80	<.001***	0.84	0.19	4.44	<.001***
Other/Unknown Employee ^b	-0.23	0.06	-3.79	<.001***	-0.03	0.07	-0.48	0.63	0.52	0.09	5.88	<.001***
Conference Speaker	0.58	0.08	7.14	<.001***	0.56	0.09	5.94	<.001***	0.71	0.12	5.99	<.001***
R	0.24				0.23				0.39			
R²	0.06				0.05				0.16			
F (df)	15.36 (9)			<.001***	14.24 (9)			<.001***	45.74 (9)			<.001***
N	2498				2498				2498			

^a Compared against EMEA region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline

Note: ^ .05 < *p* < .10, * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001

5.3.2 *Logistic Regression*

In addition to investigating the effects of individual characteristics on performance, it is essential to understand their effects on status independently as well as in concert with performance. First, the outcome of status overall – that is, the predictors of gaining status in any form – will be considered to be “any or none” and thus subject to a binary logistic regression. This approach was chosen instead of a multinomial logit model for two important reasons. Primarily, a multinomial generalization is inappropriate because it assumes low collinearity among independent variables, which the above correlational analyses (*v.s.* Table 16) indicate as violated. In addition, application of a binary logit model to the overall status variable permits streamlined comparisons with the component types of status (each also in binary form). Despite evidence from the DELPHI and AllOurIdeas.org studies indicating the existence of a clear ranking of status types, the present research did not apply an ordered logit approach in order to preserve the opportunity for these analyses to test the model. Moreover, the possibility and actuality (see Table 10) of community-network members holding more than one type of status simultaneously would have complicated the ordered logit interpretation. Therefore, four, binary outcomes – Status Overall (“Any” = 1, “None” = 0), SCN Topic Leader (“Yes” = 1, “No” = 0), SCN Moderator (“Yes” = 1, “No” = 0), and SAP Mentor (“Yes” = 1, “No” = 0) – and their patterns of antecedents each will be studied, in turn.

Table 18: Binary Logistic Regression (DV = Status Overall)

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Non-Performance Correlates															
Gender	-0.11	0.17	0.43	0.51	0.90						-0.19	0.19	1.06	0.30	0.83
North America Region ^a	0.30	0.15	4.20	.04*	1.35						0.32	0.17	3.53	.06^	1.37
Asia Pacific															
Japan Region ^a	-0.88	0.15	33.31	<.001***	0.41						-0.52	0.17	9.15	<.01**	0.59
Latin America															
Caribbean Region ^a	0.37	0.26	1.99	0.16	1.45						0.60	0.31	3.69	.05^	1.81
Tenure	0.10	0.03	8.94	<.01**	1.10						0.07	0.04	3.20	.07^	1.07
Partner Employee ^b	-0.74	0.17	20.16	<.001***	0.48						-1.19	0.19	37.64	<.001***	0.30
Customer Employee ^b	-0.52	0.16	10.88	<.001***	0.60						-0.70	0.18	14.88	<.001***	0.49
Independent Employee ^b	0.03	0.29	0.01	0.91	1.03						-0.61	0.37	2.74	0.10	0.54
Other/Unknown															
Employee ^b	-1.41	0.18	58.48	<.001***	0.24						-1.80	0.21	71.60	<.001***	0.17
Conference Speaker	0.94	0.16	35.95	<.001***	2.56						0.45	0.18	6.26	.01*	1.57
Performance															
2010-11						0.73	0.06	151.14	<.001***	2.07	0.72	0.07	116.69	<.001***	2.06
2009-10						0.26	0.05	25.65	<.001***	1.30	0.29	0.06	24.95	<.001***	1.34
Pre-2009						0.17	0.04	23.99	<.001***	1.19	0.21	0.04	24.50	<.001***	1.23
-2 Log Likelihood	1903.20					1774.31					1515.60				
Nagelkerke pseudo-R²	0.21					0.29					0.43				
Hosmer-Lemeshow χ^2															
(df)	12.10 (8)			0.15		10.27 (1)			0.25		17.59 (11)			.02*	
N	2498					2498					2498				

^a Compared against Europe Middle East and Africa region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline

Note: ^ .05 < *p* < .10, * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001

5.3.2.1 *Status Overall*

First, we explore the non-performance antecedents of status as predictive of status overall. The model adequately fits the data (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 12.10$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.15$ *n.s.*), and seven of the variables were found to be significant predictors after controlling for all other variables in the model: North American region, Asia Pacific Japan region, tenure, Partner employer, Customer employer, Other/Unknown employer, and conference speaker. The likelihood of a North American resident gaining status, compared to an Europe Middle East and Africa resident, was approximately one third more ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.35$); conversely, an Asia Pacific Japan registrant was less than half as likely ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.41$) as an Europe Middle East and Africa registrant to gain status. With each additional year of tenure, the likelihood of gaining status increased 10% ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.10$). Compared to SAP employees, Partner employees were nearly half as likely to gain status ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.48$), Customer employees were nearly two-thirds as likely ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.60$), and Other/Unknown employees were one quarter as likely ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.24$). Those individuals who presented at a conference in Contest Year 2010-11 were more than 2.5 times as likely to gain status ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.56$) as those individuals who did not.

As hypothesized and as anticipated after the above analyses, better performance during all three time periods – independent of individual non-performance characteristics – significantly increased the likelihood of gaining at least one form of status in Contest Year 2010-11. Each one badge increase pre-2009 increased the likelihood of gaining status in 2010-11 by 19% ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.19$); each one badge increase in 2009-10 increased the same by 30% ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.30$); and each one unit increase in 2010-11 more than doubled the likelihood of gaining status ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.07$) (all $p < .001$).

Mediation Analysis. The hypotheses proposed in §2.8.3.3, the significant predictive power of some non-performance antecedents on performance, the strength of influence of non-performance antecedents on the status outcome, and the demonstrated effect of performance on gaining status together support a mediation analysis. The Baron & Kenny (1986) approach to mediation requires satisfaction of the following conditions:

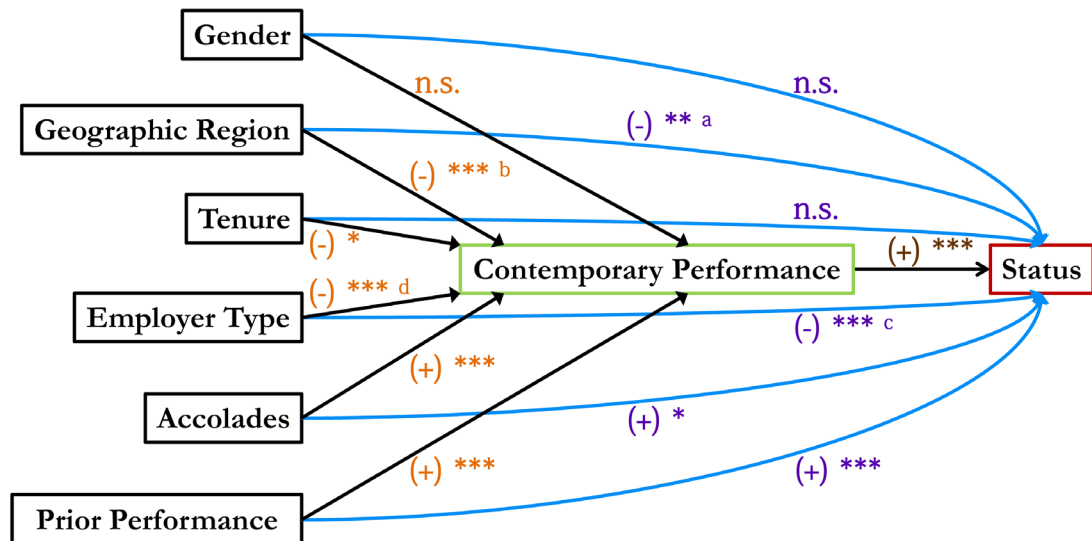
- 1) Independent of the proposed mediator, the regression of the outcome variable on the predictor variable is significant.
- 2) The regression of the proposed mediator on the outcome variable is significant.
- 3) Controlling for the predictor variable, the regression of the outcome variable on the proposed mediator is significant.
- 4) Controlling for the proposed mediator, the regression of the outcome variable on the predictor variable is non-significant and approaches zero.

In Step 1 of this model, as described above, the regression of non-performance antecedents on status overall was significant for the predictors North American region, Asia Pacific Japan region, tenure, Partner employer, Customer employer, Other/Unknown employer, and conference speaker. Therefore, only these predictors will continue in the mediation analysis, although their peer dummy referents must remain in the models. Additionally as evidenced above, the regression of performance on status overall is significant, satisfying Step 2. Next (in Step 3), controlling for the non-performance antecedent of status, the effects of performance on status overall remain significant (all $p < .001$). Finally (Step 4), comparing the coefficients of the non-performance predictors from the first model to the third indicate that the North

American region now is only marginally significant ($p = .06$); Asia Pacific Japan regionality is increased ($\Delta \text{Exp}(B) = +0.18$); tenure became only marginally significant ($p = .07$); Partner, Customer, and Other/Unknown employment effects all decreased ($\Delta \text{Exp}(B) = -0.18, -0.11, \text{ and } -0.07$, respectively); and conference speaker decreased greatly ($\Delta \text{Exp}(B) = -0.99$). Taken together, this evidence confirmed the hypothesis that performance mediates the relationship between North American residence, employment by Partner, Customer, and Other/Unknown firms, and conference speakers, and gaining status overall.

Figure 7 (below) summarizes all of these results.

Figure 7: Results Framework (DV = Status Overall)



Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

^a Compared against EMEA region baseline, APJ residents were significantly less likely to be allocated high status.

^b Compared against EMEA region baseline, APJ had significantly lower contemporary performance.

^c Compared against SAP employer baseline, employees of firms with looser inter-firm relationships to SAP were significantly less likely to be allocated high status.

^d Compared against SAP employer baseline, employees of Other/Unknown firms had significantly lower contemporary performance.

Table 19: Binary Logistic Regression (DV = SCN Topic Leader 2010-11)

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Non-Performance Correlates																	
Gender	0.74	0.43	2.96	.09 [^]	2.09								0.62	0.48	1.63	0.20	1.86
North America Region ^a	0.06	0.28	0.04	0.84	1.06								0.10	0.35	0.08	0.78	1.10
Asia Pacific Japan Region ^a	-0.53	0.27	3.82	.05 [^]	0.59								-0.06	0.35	0.03	0.86	0.94
Latin America Caribbean Region ^a	0.72	0.42	2.93	.09 [^]	2.06								0.44	0.58	0.57	0.45	1.55
Tenure	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.98	1.00								0.07	0.08	0.86	0.35	1.08
Partner Employee ^b	-0.01	0.29	0.00	0.97	0.99								-0.06	0.37	0.02	0.88	.95
Customer Employee ^b	0.60	0.25	5.72	.02*	1.83								0.42	0.32	1.72	0.19	1.52
Independent Employee ^b	0.29	0.54	0.29	0.59	1.33								-0.56	0.67	0.69	0.41	0.57
Other/Unknown Employee ^b	0.37	0.28	1.71	0.19	1.45								0.60	0.37	2.69	0.10	1.83
Conference Speaker	0.78	0.30	6.64	<.01**	2.18								0.19	0.36	0.28	0.60	1.21
Performance																	
2010-11							1.81	0.14	158.02	<.001***	6.12		1.81	0.15	148.19	<.001***	6.10
2009-10							-0.01	0.10	0.00	0.96	0.99		0.00	0.10	0.00	0.99	1.00
Pre-2009							0.06	0.08	0.59	0.44	1.06		0.05	0.08	0.34	0.56	1.05
-2 Log Likelihood	800.67						454.76						446.14				
Nagelkerke pseudo-R²	0.04						0.49						0.50				
Hosmer-Lemeshow χ^2																	
(df)	7.93 (8)			0.44			7.40 (1)			0.50			3.77 (11)			0.88	
N	2498						2498						2498				

^a Compared against Europe Middle East and Africa region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline.

Note: [^] .05 < *p* < .10, * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001

5.3.2.2 *SCN Topic Leader 2010-11*

Second, after revealing the relationships regarding overall status, the pattern of predictors for each type of status was examined. In most respects, SCN Topic Leader is the least complex of the three forms. As explained previously (§3.3.4.1), the top three performers per subject area per Contest Year automatically gain status as a SCN Topic Leader; this status achievement is an absolute result, without manipulation from a governing body. Therefore, the pathway to status gain should be a direct result of performance only.

Considering the regression of performance on SCN Topic Leader 2010-11 status, only 2010-11 performance was a significant predictor ($p < .001$); an increase of one badge unit of performance increased the likelihood of an individual earning SCN Topic Leader recognition by more than 500% ($\text{Exp}(B) = 6.12$). Individual coefficients for the other two time intervals and the overall model for the three measurement periods were all non-significant. This result is in keeping with the above prediction.

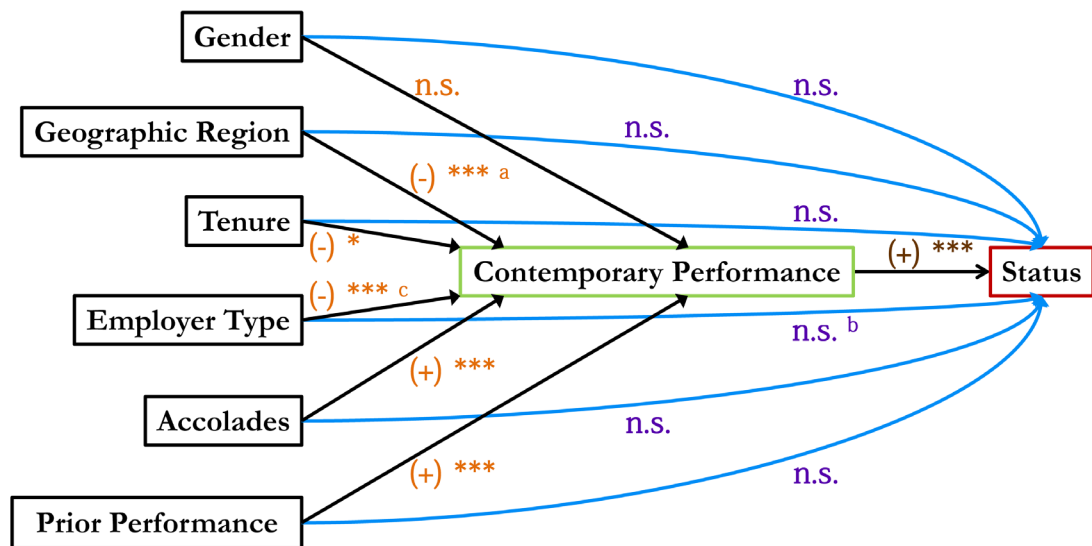
Next, in this automatic status meritocracy, the effect of non-performance individual characteristics on SCN Topic Leader status should be slim to none. The overall model poorly fit the data (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 7.93$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.44$ *n.s.*) and did not account for sufficient variance ($R^2 = 0.04$). From the list of predictor variables that were significant in the previous Status Overall model, only Customer employer ($B = 0.60$, $p = .02$) and conference speaker ($B = 0.78$, $p < .01$) remained significant. A conference speaker was more than twice ($\text{Exp}(B) = 2.18$) as likely as a non-presenter to gain SCN Topic Leader status; a partial explanation for this finding is that conference speakers receive Contributor Recognition Program points for their performance. The likelihood of a Customer employee gaining SCN Topic Leader status, compared to an SAP employee, was over 80% greater ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.83$).

In the overall model (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 3.77$, $df = 11$, $p = .88$ *n.s.*, $R^2 = 0.50$) of SCN Topic Leadership that considered non-performance predictors and performance together, only Contest Year 2010-11 performance remained a significant factor ($B = 1.81$, $p < .001$). A one badge increase in performance during this time interval boosted the likelihood of becoming a topic leader by more than 500% ($\text{Exp}(B) = 6.12$).

Mediation Analysis. Following the same procedure as above, Step 1 is valid for Customer employer and conference speaker. Step 2 is satisfied only for Contest Year 2010-11 performance, which remains significant to satisfy Step 3. Examining the effect of the performance mediator on the two non-performance indicators in question, both Customer employer and conference speaker became non-significant and lost magnitude ($\Delta\text{Exp}(B) = 0.31$ and 0.97 , respectively) – although neither indicator reached zero. Considered together, these four results provide evidence that performance in Contest Year 2010-11 fully mediates achievement of SCN Topic Leader status at the end of the same year. This result confirms the prediction derived from theory and affirms the logic of the program's design.

Figure 8 (below) summarizes all of these results.

Figure 8: Results Framework (DV = SCN Topic Leader 2010-11)



Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

^a Compared against EMEA region baseline, APJ had significantly lower contemporary performance.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline, employees of firms with looser inter-firm relationships to SAP were significantly less likely to be allocated high status.

^c Compared against SAP employer baseline, employees of Other/Unknown firms had significantly lower contemporary performance.

Table 20: Binary Logistic Regression (DV = SCN Moderator)

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Exp(<i>B</i>)		<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Exp(<i>B</i>)		<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Exp(<i>B</i>)
Non-Performance Correlates																	
Gender	-0.23	0.18	1.69	0.19	.79								-0.31	0.19	2.62	0.11	.73
North America Region ^a	0.39	0.16	5.92	.01*	1.48								0.34	0.18	3.59	.05^	1.40
Asia Pacific Japan Region ^a	-0.88	0.18	23.61	<.001***	.42								-0.50	0.19	6.84	<.01**	.60
Latin America Caribbean Region ^a	0.44	0.29	2.33	0.13	1.55								0.79	0.32	5.95	.01*	2.20
Tenure	0.14	0.04	14.74	<.001***	1.15								0.10	0.04	5.86	.02*	1.11
Partner Employee ^b	-1.39	0.22	39.26	<.001***	.25								-1.86	0.24	57.69	<.001***	.16
Customer Employee ^b	-1.38	0.22	39.23	<.001***	.25								-1.65	0.24	46.62	<.001***	.19
Independent Employee ^b	-0.78	0.39	3.91	<.05*	.46								-1.69	0.45	13.91	<.001***	.19
Other/Unknown Employee ^b	-2.32	0.26	81.45	<.001***	.10								-2.73	0.28	96.43	<.001***	.07
Conference Speaker	0.34	0.17	3.71	.05^	1.40								-0.16	0.19	0.66	0.42	.86
Performance																	
2010-11							0.39	0.06	41.21	<.001***	1.48		0.34	0.07	20.98	<.001***	1.40
2009-10							0.28	0.06	24.56	<.001***	1.32		0.37	0.07	29.91	<.001***	1.45
Pre-2009							0.15	0.04	15.69	<.001***	1.16		0.23	0.05	22.74	<.001***	1.25
-2 Log Likelihood	1473.97						1650.01						1274.92				
Nagelkerke pseudo-R²	0.28						0.16						0.40				
Hosmer-Lemeshow χ^2																	
(df)	15.87 (8)			.04*			12.29 (1)			0.14			4.95 (11)			0.76	
N	2498						2498						2498				

^a Compared against Europe Middle East and Africa region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline.

Note: ^ .05 < *p* < .10, * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001

5.3.2.3 *SCN Moderator*

Third, the exploration continued to investigate the combination of factors that leads to serving in the high status role of SCN Moderator. Given that SCN Moderator status is bestowed on individuals who are expert in both topic knowledge and electronic network of practice governance, *a priori* hypotheses expect tenure and past performance to impact positively on SCN Moderator selection (as argued in Sections 2.8.2.1 and 2.8.3.1, respectively).

The model of non-performance antecedents of status as predictive of SCN Moderator status is significant (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 15.87$, $df = 8$, $p < .05$) and a good fit for the data ($R^2 = 0.28$). Gender, Latin American Caribbean regionality, and conference presentations were not significant predictors of SCN Moderator status; as such, these predictors do not continue in the analysis. The likelihood of a North American resident achieving SCN Moderatorship, compared to an Europe Middle East and Africa resident, was approximately 50% greater ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.48$); conversely, Asia Pacific Japan regionality decreased the likelihood of gaining this status type by nearly two-thirds ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.42$). This pattern closely maps that observed for Status Overall.. The addition of one year of tenure increased the likelihood of obtaining the rank of SCN Moderator by 15% ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.15$). All of the non-SAP employer types significantly decreased the likelihood of becoming an SCN Moderator ($.05 < \text{all } \text{Exp}(B) < .50$; all $p < .05$); in other words, SAP employees were significantly more likely to be SCN Moderators than were employees of any other type of firm.

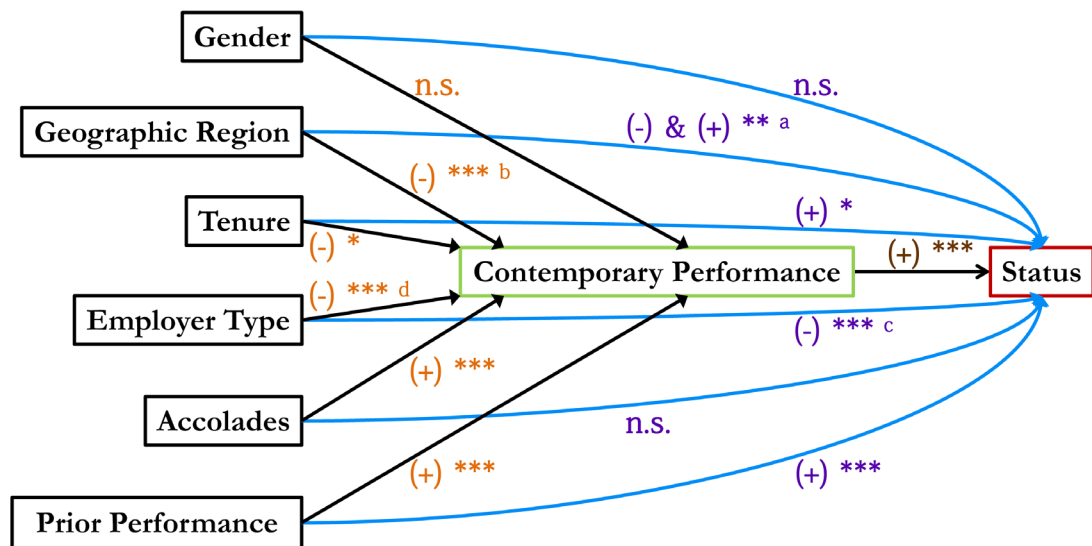
Next, the model of performance-only as predictor of SCN Moderator status was not significant overall (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 12.29$, $df = 1$, $p = .14$). However, performance in each of the time intervals was significant (all $p < .001$), generally increasing the likelihood of success by between 15% and 50% ($1.15 < \text{all } \text{Exp}(B) <$

1.50) per one badge unit of performance. These three indicator variables remained significant in the combined model – which itself was not significant (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 4.95$, $df = 11$, $p = .76$ *n.s.*), despite improved model fit ($\Delta -2LL = -199.05$, $\Delta R^2 = +0.12$). The non-performance indicators in question all remained significant except for North American regionality, which attained marginal significance ($B = 0.34$, $p = .05$); in this model, Latin America and Caribbean residence became significant ($B = 0.79$, $p = .01$).

Mediation Analysis. The indicators eligible for mediation analysis (i.e., Step 1) are North American and Asia Pacific Japan geographic regions, tenure, and all four non-SAP employer types. All three performance variables are significant and therefore are eligible to be mediators (Step 2); in Step 3, these three variables each remain significant, confirming that they at least partially mediate the relationship between non-performance indicators and SCN Moderator status. However, the only predictor variable that becomes non-significant and reduces its magnitude is North American regionality ($\Delta B = -0.05$, $\Delta p > .04$); all other eligible predictor variables remained significant and increased their magnitudes (mean $\Delta |B| = 0.41$). Therefore, performance partially mediates the relationship between North American location and gaining SCN Moderator status.

Together, these results label Figure 9 which follows.

Figure 9: Results Framework (DV = SCN Moderator)



Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

^a Compared against EMEA region baseline, APJ residents were significantly less likely to be allocated high status. Compared against EMEA region baseline, LAC residents were significantly more likely to be allocated high status.

^b Compared against EMEA region baseline, APJ had significantly lower contemporary performance.

^c Compared against SAP employer baseline, employees of firms with looser inter-firm relationships to SAP were significantly less likely to be allocated high status.

^d Compared against SAP employer baseline, employees of Other/Unknown firms had significantly lower contemporary performance.

Table 21: Binary Logistic Regression (DV = SAP Mentor)

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E. (B)</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Exp(B)	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E. (B)</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Exp(B)	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E. (B)</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Exp(B)
Non-Performance Correlates															
Gender	-0.30	0.44	0.47	0.49	0.74						-0.33	0.50	0.45	0.50	0.72
North America Region ^a	0.39	0.33	1.42	0.23	1.48						0.49	0.36	1.83	0.18	1.63
Asia Pacific Japan Region ^a	-1.91	0.44	19.05	<.001***	0.15						-1.68	0.47	12.60	<.001***	0.19
Latin America Caribbean Region ^a	0.24	0.71	0.11	0.74	1.25						0.56	0.80	0.49	0.48	1.75
Tenure	-0.02	0.07	0.09	0.76	0.98						-0.08	0.08	0.87	0.35	0.93
Partner Employee ^b	1.64	0.36	20.75	<.001***	5.17						1.61	0.39	17.03	<.001***	5.01
Customer Employee ^b	1.39	0.34	16.75	<.001***	4.01						1.50	0.37	16.86	<.001***	4.50
Independent Employee ^b	3.28	0.49	44.68	<.001***	26.52						3.08	0.54	33.06	<.001***	21.81
Other/Unknown Employee ^b	-1.08	1.06	1.03	0.31	0.34						-1.20	1.09	1.20	0.27	0.30
Conference Speaker	3.59	0.35	106.49	<.001***	36.41						3.20	0.37	76.28	<.001***	24.51
Performance															
2010-11						0.52	0.12	18.15	<.001***	1.67	0.38	0.15	6.19	.01*	1.47
2009-10						0.31	0.11	7.37	<.01**	1.36	0.35	0.14	6.16	.01*	1.42
Pre-2009						0.30	0.08	14.89	<.001***	1.35	0.25	0.09	7.43	<.01**	1.28
-2 Log Likelihood	391.58					526.31					330.89				
Nagelkerke pseudo-R²	0.44					0.22					0.53				
Hosmer-Lemeshow χ^2 (df)	6.70 (8)			0.57		6.19 (1)			0.63		2.12 (11)			0.98	
N	2498					2498					2498				

^a Compared against Europe Middle East and Africa region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline.

Note: $^{\wedge}$.05 < p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

5.3.2.4 SAP Mentor

The final exploration of status construction by type examines those factors that influence the likelihood of reaching the highest ranked status: SAP Mentorship. In direct opposition to the absolute, meritocratic SCN Topic Leader from within the Contributor Recognition Program, recall (from Section 3.3.5.1) that selection to the SAP Mentor Initiative is highly obscure and discretionary; this process can be likened to the papal conclave. Therefore, and in combination with the hypotheses presented in §2.8, there is *a priori* reason to expect indicator variables beyond performance to influence the successful outcome as SAP Mentor.

First, the basic model of SAP Mentorship regressed on non-performance indicators was not significant (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 6.70$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.57$ *n.s.*) but represented an acceptable fit to the data ($R^2 = 0.44$). Five variables – Asia Pacific Japan region, Partner employer, Customer employer, Independent employer, and conference speaker – were significant (all $p < .001$) after controlling for all other variables. Recall that these represent a sub-selection of the variables that were significant in the Status Overall model – absencing only North American residents, tenure, and employees of Other/Unknown firms, and adding Independent firms' employees. Compared to an Europe Middle East and Africa resident, the likelihood of an Asia Pacific Japan resident gaining SAP Mentor status was 85% less ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.15$). Partner, Customer, and Independent firm employees all benefited from an advantage in gaining SAP Mentor status as compared to SAP employee peers. Customer employees were more than four times as likely to gain status of this type ($\text{Exp}(B) = 4.01$); Partner employees had a 417% increase in likelihood of obtaining SAP Mentor status ($\text{Exp}(B) = 5.17$); and Independent employees enjoyed a more than 25-fold boost to their likelihood of gaining status ($\text{Exp}(B) = 26.52$). Only conference speakers surpassed this effect, experiencing a likelihood of obtaining SAP Mentor status that was more than 36 times

(Exp(B) = 36.41) that of non-presenters'. Clearly, non-performance antecedents have a huge impact on the construction of status; further inquiry needs to confirm whether this influence continues after accounting for performance effects.

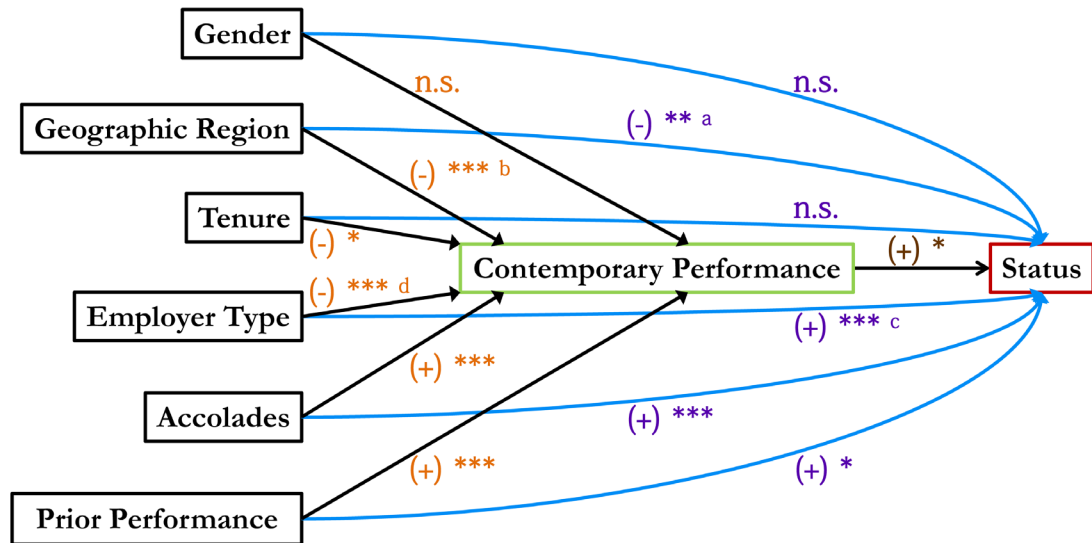
As with all other status outcomes except SCN Topic Leader (as explained *n.s.*), higher performance during all three time intervals was significantly associated with SAP Mentor status (all $p < .01$). An increase of one performance badge improved the likelihood of being a SAP Mentor by 35-67% (Exp(B) = 1.35, 1.36, and 1.67, respectively). This performance-only model was not significant (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 6.19$, df = 1, $p = .57$ *n.s.*) and represented an acceptable fit ($R^2 = 0.22$) for the data.

Modelling the indicators of SAP Mentorship altogether (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 2.12$, df = 11, $p = .98$ *n.s.*; $R^2 = 0.53$), performance during all three time periods remained significant (all $p < .01$); the magnitude of the effect remained roughly constant, as it decreased slightly for 2010-11 ($\Delta\text{Exp}(B) = -0.20$) and pre-2009 ($\Delta\text{Exp}(B) = -0.07$) but increased slightly ($\Delta\text{Exp}(B) = +0.06$) for 2009-10. Moreover, the five non-performance antecedents that were significant in the more parsimonious model remained significant (all $p < .001$). Asia Pacific Japan, Customer employer, Independent employer, and conference speaker all reduced their magnitude (mean $\Delta|B| = 0.21$); Customer employer increased its magnitude by $\Delta B = +0.11$ ($\Delta\text{Exp}(B) = +0.49$).

Mediation Analysis. Untangling the above overlapping influences requires an additional mediation analysis. After an additional application of the Baron & Kenny (1986) methodology, the above-described results clearly demonstrate satisfaction of conditions #1-2. However, the final, complex model violates Step 3 because all eligible predictor variables remain significant after controlling for the proposed mediator. Therefore, it cannot be argued that performance mediates the relationship between non-performance antecedents and SAP Mentor status outcome.

Finally, these empirical outcomes are reported in the below Figure 10.

Figure 10: Results Framework (DV = SAP Mentor)



Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

^a Compared against EMEA region baseline, APJ residents were significantly less likely to be allocated high status.

^b Compared against EMEA region baseline, APJ had significantly lower contemporary performance.

^c Compared against SAP employer baseline, employees of firms with looser inter-firm relationships to SAP were significantly more likely to be allocated high status.

^d Compared against SAP employer baseline, employees of Other/Unknown firms had significantly lower contemporary performance.

5.4 REVIEW

In addition to the above in-depth analyses, trends across the analyses become apparent. The first is that gender was never significantly associated with status: neither for status overall nor for any of its component types; neither independently of performance nor as part of an overall, mediated model. In other words, men were no more likely to gain status of any type in the SAP Community-Network than were women. Although this finding confirms the ethos of meritocracy that is inherent to electronic networks of practices, it contradicts a central function of ascribed status

characteristics that the group that enjoys more status in the wider social environment would gain higher status in the specific group. The only other indicator variable that was never significant was Latin America Caribbean regionality; Latin America and Caribbean was only significant in the performance-included model of SCN Moderator status – but it was not significant in the parsimonious, non-performance correlates only model. This reveals that, compared to Europe Middle East Africa residents, Latin America and Caribbean residents are no more or less likely to obtain status. This finding is unusual because Latin America Caribbean is the smallest geographic region (comprising only 4% of the sample). To have an effect on the likelihood of obtaining status on par with the origin region in Europe suggests that Latin America and Caribbean residents are more influential than is proportional.

At the opposite extreme, only employment by a Customer firm is always significantly associated with obtaining status in the SAP Community Network. However, Customer employment, as compared with SAP employment, is negatively related to overall status and SCN Moderator status but positively related to SCN Topic Leadership and SAP Mentorship. The result indicates that the effect of Customer employment on status is sensitive to the type of status. For example, the SAP Mentor Initiative's coordinator strives to maintain a composition that is roughly 30% Customers, causing Customer employees to enjoy a more-than-proportional success rate for status gain. On the other hand, it might represent part of the status allocation mechanism and the function of employer type as a status antecedent.

Each of the other antecedents was a significant indicator of status under certain conditions. During the comparison across the different types of status, an interesting pattern emerged. When tenure was significant and positive (i.e., in modelling SCN Moderator construction), employer types were significant and negative – and *vice versa*

(i.e., when ascertaining SAP Mentorship). In other words, working for a known, non-SAP employer had the opposite effect to increasing membership duration in the community-network. This finding is surprising because of the assumed relationship between SAP topic knowledge and SAP Community Network expertise (see discussion in Section 2.5.1), and employment in firms desirable for the influence in the SAP business ecosystem. Rationalisation *post hoc* suggests that electronic network of practice members could “compensate” in the allocation of status for employment by a lower status firm with longer tenure in the community. Further analyses are required in order to understand why indicator variables that have a clear and persistent (i.e., after accounting for mediation) effect do not have a consistent (i.e., in all conditions) effect.

5.4.1 Purpose of RQ3

The models proposed above are less powerful in one key consideration: the attempt to formulate status allocation for a sample including individuals who have no status. Of course, this approach is common across the social sciences; for example, survival analyses require some cases to die to predict who else might survive. However, this concern does not imply that the present approach is incorrect; on the contrary, the same approach should be applied to the sub-sample of individuals who obtain one or more forms of status. If the pattern of results remains as already observed, then this second analysis will provide confirmation of the allocation of status. However, if the combination of status indicators is different for those individuals who definitely have status versus those individuals still striving for status, then that result will have different implications for status-gaining strategies than does the above.

The sub-sample of status-holders only (i.e., cases where Status Overall = 1) has $N = 413$, representing 16.53% of the total sample.

5.5 CORRELATIONAL ANALYSES

Compared to the larger total sample, the prevailing trend of correlations among variables in the sub-sample is one of losing statistical power. Although this result was expected to some degree given the reduction in sample size, a sample size of over 400 in a matrix of 18 variables should be sufficient to reveal interesting, significant associations.

Indeed, the most surprising result is that gender now is significantly positively associated with higher performance in each of the three time intervals; that is, men have higher performance than women in each contest period. The associations between gender and North American regionality, Customer employer, and employment by a firm with an unknown relationship to SAP became no longer statistically significant. Relationships between gender and all other variables remained as in the full sample.

Performance in Contest Year 2010-11 no longer was significantly related to any geographic region, nor to presenting at a corporate conference, but it was significantly negatively related to tenure such that longer-serving status-holders earned fewer performance badges in 2010-11. Although this finding is consistent with the relationship of tenure to SCN Topic Leader (i.e., the status type directly related to performance), the result is somewhat surprising given both the increased opportunity to perform – and the incumbent responsibility to do so – inherent in status positions. Moreover, for 2010-11 Contest Year, among status-holders only performance became significantly negatively related to SCN Moderator status, representing a change in the direction of association as observed in the overall sample. This finding is surprising given the increased activity required of SCN Moderators; however, this observation is in keeping with the above trend of tenure and SCN Topic Leader, suggesting that these individuals of whom much is expected comparatively might be resting on their laurels.

Other variables that changed the direction of their relationship to Performance 2010-11 include all of the employment types: SAP employment became negatively associated with higher performance, while Partner and Customer (not previously significantly associated at all) and Unknown employers each became positively associated with higher performance.

Patterns of relationships for Contest Year 2009-10 changed exactly as for 2010-11 as above, with three exceptions. Both North American and Latin American Caribbean regionality remained significantly related to performance (although in different directions). Customer employment did not become significantly associated with higher performance. The relationship between tenure and 2009-10 Performance became non-significant.

For the time interval encapsulating performance pre-2009, all associations remained as in the overall sample, with three exceptions. Europe Middle East Africa and Asia Pacific Japan regionality were no longer significantly associated with performance, nor was working for a Partner firm. The relationships between SCN Moderator status and SCN Topic Leader status lost statistical significance to performance; in other words, among individuals who held at least one type of status in 2010-11, a reputation for high performance was not associated with occupying a position of high status. This result highlights a core conceptual difference between reputation and status; moreover, this finding reveals a much richer and more complex relationship than was observed in the sample at large, when reputation at all three time periods was significantly positively related to high status of all three forms.

Other than as described above, the geographical regions' associations to the other variables remained unchanged or lost statistical significance with only a few noteworthy developments. First, registration from Europe Middle East and Africa region retained its positive significance to tenure (reflecting SAP's German origin and

significant user base), but it was not significantly related to any other variable; this result represents a change from the slight positive association that Europe Middle East and Africa regionality had with each type of status. Second, Latin America and Caribbean region was affected similarly as was Europe Middle East and Africa, retaining significant negative relationship to tenure and becoming not significantly associated with any type of status. Third, Asia Pacific Japan's correlations to the other variables remained largely unchanged in significance and direction except for one key outcome, whereby SCN Topic Leadership became significantly positively associated with Asia Pacific Japan regionality. No *a priori* expectation explains the change in this relationship, and *post hoc* rationalisation would suggest that the language-based topic areas (including Chinese and Japanese) in which an individual can become a SCN Topic Leader predispose registrants from this region toward this form of status, if any. Fourth, participation from North America loses its statistical significance in the relationship of region to SCN Moderator status, and becomes significantly negatively related to SCN Topic Leadership; this last observation is curious given the region's significant positive association with other success markers (including conference presentation and a reputation for high performance). Nonetheless, this finding is in line with the non-significant association between North American residence and Performance 2010-11 – in both the smaller subset and the overall sample.

The associations between tenure and the indicator and outcome variables hardly changed among the smaller status-holders only subset. The relationships to SAP Employee, Other/Unknown Employee, and conference presenter became statistically insignificant. Conversely, the association between tenure and SCN Topic Leadership in 2010-11 became significant and negatively related, indicating that longer membership duration was not associated with gaining status as a SCN Topic Leader. This result is unexpected because of the assumption that community-network tenure is related to

expertise, which in turn is related to SCN Topic Leadership. Instead, this result indicates that even if long-serving members have gained more expertise over the duration of their membership in SAP Community Network, they do not produce enough to earn status as a SCN Topic Leader. Even the Contributor Recognition Program points earned for presenting at a conference are insufficient to retain among status-holders only the positive association with SCN Topic Leadership; this relationship became negative for the subset, as did the link between conference speakers and SCN Moderators.

In addition to the changed associations previously described, the relationships between employer type and other variables among individuals who had gained at least one type of status remained largely unchanged. In the subset, SCN Topic Leadership became significantly and positively related to both Partner and Customer employment, changed from negatively to positively associated with employment by an Other/Unknown firm, and remained both negatively related to SAP employment and non-significantly related to Independent employment. This observation that employees of nearly any other firm but SAP are associated with SCN Topic Leadership inspires two fruitful conjectures. First, this result indicates that SAP's culture, its motivation and reward structures, and its relationship to SAP Community Network fail to result in employee production of online content to the quantity that other firm types' do. Second, the association between Partner and Customer firms and SCN Topic Leadership similarly indicate the degree to which those firms' employees value the achievement of that status. In addition, Independent employment became significantly associated with SCN Moderator status, but negatively so. The significant positive association between Independent employment and SAP Mentor status and (only for the subset) with conference speakers, coupled with the consistent relationships between SCN Moderator status and the other employment types, supports the conclusion that the nature of the employer's relationship to SAP significantly impacts its employees'

status as SCN Moderator. This effect will be explored further in additional logistic regression analyses.

Finally, the most striking effect of the status-only subsample comparison to the larger overall sample was that all three forms of status became significantly negatively related to each other – whereas they had all three been significantly positively associated. In other words, among those individuals who held status of any form, the overlap to another form of status was minimal. A longitudinal study would be necessary to refute Merton’s “ratchet effect”, but these early observations indicate the absence of a winner-takes-all status tournament environment.

Table 22: Pearson's Correlations among Status-Holders Only

		PERFORMANCE 2010-11	PERFORMANCE 2009-10	PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	GENDER	North America Regional Dummy	EMEA Regional Dummy	APJ Regional Dummy	LAC Regional Dummy	SCN TENURE	SAP EMPLOYEE	PARTNER EMPLOYEE	CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	INDEPENDENT	OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	Conference Speaker 2010-11 Dummy	SAP MENTOR 2010-11	SCN MODERATOR 2010-11	SCN TOPIC LEADER 2010-11
PERFORMANCE 2010-11	<i>r</i>	1	.53**	.15**	.12*	.03	-.08	.01	.08	-.15**	-.35**	.17**	.18**	.07	.20**	.04	.12*	-.32**	.55**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00	.00	.01	.54	.09	.78	.10	.00	.00	.00	.00	.14	.00	.46	.02	.00	.00
PERFORMANCE 2009-10	<i>r</i>	.53**	1	.46**	.13*	.11*	-.01	-.03	-.14**	.00	-.24**	.13**	.08	.15**	.10*	.10	.19**	-.10*	.23**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00		.00	.01	.03	.82	.55	.00	.99	.00	.01	.10	.00	.04	.05	.00	.05	.00
PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	<i>r</i>	.15**	.46**	1	.12*	.12*	.03	-.05	-.20**	.21**	-.17**	.08	.01	.14**	.09	.21**	.20**	-.03	.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00		.02	.02	.53	.28	.00	.00	.00	.09	.78	.01	.07	.00	.00	.55	.45
GENDER	<i>r</i>	.12*	.13*	.12*	1	-.09	.07	.04	-.03	.05	-.13**	.12*	.06	.06	.03	.06	.05	-.15**	.14**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.01	.01	.02		.07	.16	.43	.54	.29	.01	.02	.25	.25	.55	.25	.29	.00	.01
NAmer Regional Dummy	<i>r</i>	.03	.11*	.12*	-.09	1	-.54**	-.41**	-.19**	-.02	.10*	-.16**	.02	-.01	-.06	.11*	.11*	.07	-.10*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.54	.03	.02	.07		.00	.00	.00	.76	.05	.00	.68	.87	.20	.02	.02	.14	.04
EMEA Regional Dummy	<i>r</i>	-.08	-.01	.03	.07	-.54**	1	-.41**	-.19**	.10*	.06	-.02	-.08	.04	-.05	.04	.02	.03	-.07
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.09	.82	.53	.16	.00		.00	.00	.04	.22	.65	.11	.41	.33	.44	.75	.57	.17

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N = 413

		PERFORMANCE 2010-11	PERFORMANCE 2009-10	PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	GENDER	North America Regional Dummy	EMEA Regional Dummy	APJ Regional Dummy	LAC Regional Dummy	SCN TENURE	SAP EMPLOYEE	PARTNER EMPLOYEE	CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	INDEPENDENT	OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	Conference Speaker 2010-11 Dummy	SAP MENTOR 2010-11	SCN MODERATOR 2010-11	SCN TOPIC LEADER 2010-11
APJ Regional Dummy	<i>r</i>	.01	-.03	-.05	.04	-.41**	-.41**	1	-.14**	.00	-.23**	.21**	.08	-.01	.18**	-.13**	-.12*	-.15**	.17**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.78	.55	.28	.43	.00	.00		.00	.94	.00	.00	.09	.92	.00	.01	.02	.00	.00
LAC Regional Dummy	<i>r</i>	.08	-.14**	-.20**	-.03	-.19**	-.19**	-.14**	1	-.16**	.08	.00	-.03	-.06	-.09	-.06	-.04	.06	.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.10	.00	.00	.54	.00	.00	.00		.00	.12	.93	.50	.26	.08	.24	.40	.25	.39
SCN TENURE	<i>r</i>	-.15**	.00	.21**	.05	-.02	.10*	.00	-.16**	1	.10	-.10*	-.03	.02	-.06	.03	-.05	.14**	-.12*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.99	.00	.29	.76	.04	.94	.00		.05	.04	.62	.74	.27	.60	.28	.01	.02
SAP EMPLOYEE	<i>r</i>	-.35**	-.24**	-.17**	-.13**	.10*	.06	-.23**	.08	.10	1	-.54**	-.57**	-.28**	-.43**	-.08	-.43**	.62**	-.39**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.01	.05	.22	.00	.12	.05		.00	.00	.00	.00	.10	.00	.00	.00
PARTNER EMPLOYEE	<i>r</i>	.17**	.13**	.08	.12*	-.16**	-.02	.21**	.00	-.10*	-.54**	1	.34**	-.02	-.14**	.07	.31**	-.30**	.15**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.01	.09	.02	.00	.65	.00	.93	.04	.00		.00	.66	.00	.14	.00	.00	.00
CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	<i>r</i>	.180**	.08	.01	.06	.02	-.08	.08	-.03	-.03	-.57**	.34**	1	.00	-.11*	.08	.30**	-.35**	.22**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.10	.78	.25	.68	.11	.09	.50	.62	.00	.00		.96	.03	.12	.00	.00	.00

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N = 413

		PERFORMANCE 2010-11	PERFORMANCE 2009-10	PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	GENDER	North America Regional Dummy	EMEA Regional Dummy	APJ Regional Dummy	LAC Regional Dummy	SCN TENURE	SAP EMPLOYEE	PARTNER EMPLOYEE	CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	INDEPENDENT	OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	Conference Speaker 2010-11 Dummy	SAP MENTOR 2010-11	SCN MODERATOR 2010-11	SCN TOPIC LEADER 2010-11
INDEPENDENT	<i>r</i>	.07	.15**	.14**	.06	-.01	.04	-.01	-.06	.02	-.28**	-.02	.00	1	-.07	.12*	.34**	-.15**	-.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.14	.00	.01	.25	.87	.41	.92	.26	.74	.00	.66	.96		.15	.01	.00	.00	.88
OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	<i>r</i>	.20**	.10*	.09	.03	-.06	-.05	.18**	-.09	-.06	-.43**	-.14**	-.11*	-.07	1	-.12*	-.14**	-.25**	.32**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.04	.07	.55	.20	.33	.00	.08	.27	.00	.00	.03	.15		.01	.01	.00	.00
Conference Speaker Dummy	<i>r</i>	.04	.10	.21**	.06	.11*	.04	-.13**	-.06	.03	-.08	.07	.08	.12*	-.12*	1	.45**	-.10*	-.10*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.46	.05	.00	.25	.02	.44	.01	.24	.60	.10	.14	.12	.01	.01		.00	.04	.04

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N = 413

		PERFORMANCE 2010-11	PERFORMANCE 2009-10	PERFORMANCE PRE-2009	GENDER	North America Regional Dummy	EMEA Regional Dummy	APJ Regional Dummy	LAC Regional Dummy	SCN TENURE	SAP EMPLOYEE	PARTNER EMPLOYEE	CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE	INDEPENDENT	OTHER / UNKNOWN EMPLOYEE	Conference Speaker Dummy	SAP MENTOR 2010-11	MODERATOR 2010-11	TOPIC LEADER 2010-11
SAP MENTOR 2010-11	<i>r</i>	.12*	.19**	.20**	.05	.11*	.02	-.12*	-.04	-.05	-.43**	.31**	.30**	.34**	-.14**	.45**	1	-.39**	-.11*
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.02	.00	.00	.29	.02	.75	.02	.40	.28	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.03
SCN MODERATOR 2010-11	<i>r</i>	-.32**	-.10*	-.03	-.15**	.07	.03	-.15**	.06	.14**	.62**	-.30**	-.35**	-.15**	-.25**	-.10*	-.39**	1	-.52**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.00	.05	.55	.00	.14	.57	.00	.25	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.04	.00	.00	.00
SCN TOPIC LEADER 2010-11	<i>r</i>	.55**	.23**	.04	.14**	-.10*	-.07	.17**	.04	-.12*	-.39**	.15**	.22**	-.01	.32**	-.10*	-.11*	-.52**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.00	.00	.45	.01	.04	.17	.00	.39	.02	.00	.00	.00	.88	.00	.04	.03	.00	.00

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N = 413

5.6 REGRESSION ANALYSES

5.6.1 *Linear Regression*

In order to account for the effects of altered associations among individuals holding status in any form, simple linear regression was performed between non-performance individual characteristics and performance. Similarly to the above results, the overall model was significant in each time interval studied. In Contest Year 2010-11 among status-holders only ($F = 7.17$, $df = 10$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.15$), North American regionality remained non-significant, and Latin America Caribbean, tenure, and Unknown employer each remained a significant indicator of performance (all $p < .03$). Neither Asia Pacific Japan regionality nor presenting at a conference maintained a statistically significant association with performance. As compared with SAP, all three other employer types became significantly positively associated with higher performance ($.5 < \text{all } B < .65$, all $p < .05$). Moreover, gender became significantly associated with higher performance such that men earned 0.37 more badges than did women ($B = 0.37$, $t = 2.11$, $p = .04$).

For 2009-10 Contest Year, the model fit adequately ($F = 4.80$, $df = 10$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .11$) but less well than in Contest Year 2010-11. In addition to the losses of statistical significance described above, tenure was no longer significantly associated with performance; for individuals who rank with at least one form of status, duration of membership did not impact their 2009-10 performance. In this model as compared with the model for the overall sample, gender was a significant indicator of performance such that men earned 0.42 more performance badges than did women ($B = 0.42$, $t = 2.04$, $p = .04$). In addition, employment by a firm with an unknown relationship to SAP – versus with working for SAP and in comparison to the overall sample – became significantly associated with higher performance in Contest Year

2009-10 ($B = 0.75, t = 1.05, p < .01$). All other relationships in the sub-sample remained as in the overall sample.

Regarding Performance pre-2009, the sub-sample's model nearly replicated the overall model ($F = 8.10, df = 10, p < .001, R^2 = 0.17$). Asia Pacific Japan residence no longer was related significantly to performance; however, North American regionality reached marginal significance ($B = 0.38, t = 1.73, p = .08$). Together, these observations indicate that pre-2009 reputation is constructed in the sub-sample similar to the combined sample; further logistic regression analyses will examine whether this consistency holds for the allocation of status.

Table 23: Simple Linear Regression among Status-Holders Only

	Performance 2010-11				Performance 2009-10				Performance Pre-2009			
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E. (B)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E. (B)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E. (B)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Non-Performance Correlates												
Gender	0.37	0.17	2.11	.04*	0.42	0.20	2.04	.04*	0.45	0.26	1.72	.09^
North America Region ^a	0.24	0.15	1.61	0.11	0.33	0.17	1.93	.05^	0.38	0.22	1.73	.08^
Asia Pacific Japan Region ^a	-0.08	0.17	-0.48	0.63	-0.22	0.20	-1.09	0.28	-0.32	0.25	-1.27	0.21
Latin America Caribbean Region ^a	0.62	0.27	2.30	.02*	-0.65	0.32	-2.04	.04*	-1.05	0.40	-2.60	<.01**
Tenure	-0.07	0.03	-2.12	.03*	0.00	0.04	0.01	0.99	0.21	0.05	4.29	<.001***
Partner Employee ^b	0.58	0.19	3.00	<.01**	0.68	0.23	3.02	<.01**	0.82	0.29	2.85	<.01**
Customer Employee ^b	0.53	0.18	3.01	<.01**	0.14	0.21	0.68	0.50	-0.18	0.26	-0.67	0.51
Independent Employee ^b	0.62	0.30	2.05	.04*	1.10	0.36	3.10	<.01**	1.11	0.45	2.46	.01**
Other/Unknown Employee ^b	1.14	0.21	5.41	<.001***	0.75	0.25	3.03	<.01**	0.99	0.32	3.15	<.01**
Conference Speaker	0.07	0.14	0.51	0.61	0.18	0.17	1.05	0.30	0.79	0.22	3.68	<.001***
R	0.39				0.33				0.41			
R²	0.15				0.11				0.17			
F (df)	7.17 (10)			<.001***	4.80 (10)			<.001***	8.10 (10)			<.001***
N	413				413				413			

^a Compared against EMEA region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline.

5.6.2 *Logistic Regression*

This section proceeds as for the analyses of the overall sample – logistic regressions of non-performance indicators and performance on SCN Topic Leader, then SCN Moderator, then SAP Mentor status outcomes in 2010-11 – and including comparisons to the results presented above in Section 5.3. A model for Status Overall for the sub-sample of status-holders only would feature from DV = 1 for all cases; that analysis is impossible and, thus, excluded.

Table 24: Binary Logistic Regression (DV = SCN Topic Leader 2010-11) among Status-Holders Only

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Non-Performance Correlates															
Gender	1.22	0.50	6.01	.01*	3.40						1.08	0.59	3.32	.07^	2.94
North America Region ^a	-0.03	0.34	0.01	0.92	0.97						-0.12	0.41	0.08	0.77	0.89
Asia Pacific Japan Region ^a	0.35	0.35	1.02	0.31	1.42						0.66	0.45	2.12	0.15	1.93
Latin America Caribbean Region ^a	0.86	0.52	2.73	<.10^	2.36						0.12	0.65	0.04	0.85	1.13
Tenure	-0.12	0.07	2.50	0.11	0.89						-0.03	0.09	0.08	0.78	0.98
Partner Employee ^b	0.68	0.36	3.54	.06^	1.97						0.39	0.44	0.78	0.38	1.48
Customer Employee ^b	1.37	0.33	17.20	<.001***	3.95						1.14	0.40	8.04	<.01**	3.12
Independent Employee ^b	0.42	0.63	0.45	0.50	1.53						-0.25	0.70	0.13	0.72	0.78
Other/Unknown Employee ^b	2.42	0.39	38.31	<.001***	11.24						2.20	0.52	17.68	<.001***	9.04
Conference Speaker	-0.55	0.33	2.73	<.10^	0.58						-0.58	0.38	2.30	0.13	0.56
Performance															
2010-11						1.59	0.18	77.00	<.001***	4.91	1.55	0.21	55.84	<.001***	4.71
2009-10						-0.26	0.13	3.88	<.05*	0.77	-0.24	0.15	2.77	<.10^	0.78
Pre-2009						-0.01	0.09	0.02	0.89	0.99	-0.02	0.10	0.06	0.81	0.98
-2 Log Likelihood	365.89					299.49					256.52				
Nagelkerke pseudo-R²	0.28					0.47					0.57				
Hosmer-Lemeshow χ^2 (df)	16.72 (8)			.03*		11.93 (1)			0.15		10.41 (11)			0.24	
N	413					413					413				

^a Compared against Europe Middle East and Africa region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline.

Note: ^ .05 < p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

5.6.2.1 *SCN Topic Leader 2010-11*

First, unlike the model for the overall sample, the model of non-performance indicators of status among status-holders only does not adequately fit the data (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 16.72$, $df = 8$, $p = .03$). Although a significant test statistic implies that the model should not be investigated further, an interesting finding indicates that both gender ($B = 1.22$, Wald = 6.01, $p = .01$) and unknown employer ($B = 2.42$, Wald = 38.31, $p < .001$) became significantly indicative of SCN Topic Leader status. Compared with women, men were more than three times as likely to gain SCN Topic Leader status ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.40$). As compared with SAP employees, the likelihood of those individuals who worked for a firm with other/unknown relationship to SAP then achieving SCN Topic Leader status was greater than 11-fold that of SAP employees' ($\text{Exp}(B) = 11.24$). Compared with results for the overall sample, these are exceptionally large effects. Conversely, speaking at a conference lost statistical significance. This result follows the trend as described in the correlational analyses.

The model for performance-only as an indicator of SCN Topic Leader status among individuals with one or more form of status was a good fit for the data (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 11.93$, $df = 1$, $p = .15$ *n.s.*). As expected logically from the design of the SAP Community Network reward system, performance in 2010-11 remained significantly associated with SCN Topic Leader status ($B = 1.59$, Wald = 77.00, $p < .001$); each additional performance badge increased the likelihood of gaining SCN Topic Leader status by nearly 400% ($\text{Exp}(B) = 4.91$). Surprisingly, performance in 2009-10 became significantly negatively associated with SCN Topic Leader status in 2010-11 ($B = -0.26$, Wald = 3.88, $p < .05$); for each additional performance badge earned in Contest Year 2009-10, the likelihood of gaining SCN Topic Leader status in 2010-11 was reduced by 23% ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.77$). Although this observation holds logically because SCN Topic Leader is not an enduring form of status and instead resets each Contest Year, that the result was not significant for the overall sample but is

significant for the status-only subsample might be more than an artefact of the reduced case numbers.

When the non-performance correlates and performance were considered together as indicators of SCN Topic Leader status, the model was an improved fit for the data (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 10.41$, $df = 11$, $p = .24$ *n.s.*). For the status-holders only sub-sample, all of the associations remained as in the overall sample with only two exceptions. First, as results from examining only the non-performance correlates, employment by an Other/Unknown firm (relative to working for SAP) remained significantly positively related to increased likelihood of achieving SCN Topic Leader status ($\text{Exp}(B) = 9.04$, $p < .001$). In addition, Customer employment became significant in the complete model, although it was not significant in the same model in the larger sample ($B = 1.14$, $\text{Wald} = 8.04$, $p < .01$); individuals employed by Customer firms were more than three times as likely as SAP employees to become SCN Topic Leaders ($\text{Exp}(B) = 3.12$).

Mediation Analysis. The same Baron & Kenny (1986) method utilised above next evaluated the function of performance as mediator of the non-performance correlates' effects on SCN Topic Leader status among status-holders only. In Step 1, only gender, customer employer, and other/unknown employer were significantly (all $p < .01$) associated with SCN Topic Leader status among status-holders only. In Step 2, as examined above both 2010-11 and 2009-10 Contest Years' performance were significant ($p < .05$). Next, in the complete model only 2010-11 performance remained significant ($p < .001$), and only the relationship between gender and SCN Topic Leader lost its statistical significance ($.05 < p < .10$) – satisfying Step 3 and partially satisfying Step 4 ($B = 1.08$, $p = .07$ *n.s.*, $\Delta B = -0.14$). Therefore, among status-holders only performance in 2010-11 partially mediates the relationship between gender and SCN Topic Leader status. This result explains why gender became a significant indicator among the subset whereby only performance had been for the larger sample.

Table 25: Binary Logistic Regression (DV = SCN Moderator) among Status-Holders Only

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Non-Performance Correlates															
Gender	-1.13	0.52	4.83	.03*	0.32						-1.19	0.55	4.75	.03*	0.31
North America Region ^a	0.09	0.35	0.06	0.80	1.09						0.09	0.36	0.07	0.80	1.10
Asia Pacific Japan Region ^a	-0.12	0.37	0.11	0.75	0.89						-0.04	0.39	0.01	0.92	0.96
Latin America Caribbean Region ^a	0.29	0.67	0.19	0.67	1.33						0.88	0.71	1.54	0.21	2.40
Tenure	0.18	0.08	5.73	.02*	1.20						0.15	0.08	3.42	.06^	1.16
Partner Employee ^b	-1.47	0.37	15.63	<.001***	0.23						-1.48	0.39	14.33	<.001***	0.23
Customer Employee ^b	-2.01	0.34	34.92	<.001***	0.13						-1.86	0.36	27.37	<.001***	0.16
Independent Employee ^b	-2.05	0.56	13.43	<.001***	0.13						-2.16	0.60	13.11	<.001***	0.12
Other/Unknown Employee ^b	-2.62	0.41	41.23	<.001***	0.07						-2.44	0.44	30.15	<.001***	0.09
Conference Speaker	-0.65	0.31	4.25	.04^	0.52						-0.75	0.33	5.28	.02*	0.47
Performance															
2010-11						-0.75	0.12	38.04	<.001***	0.47	-0.60	0.14	17.42	<.001***	0.55
2009-10						0.21	0.11	3.83	.05^	1.23	0.30	0.13	5.61	.02*	1.35
Pre-2009						-0.04	0.07	0.35	0.56	0.96	0.04	0.09	0.23	0.63	1.04
-2 Log Likelihood	331.92					414.92					310.81				
Nagelkerke pseudo-R²	0.41					0.17					0.46				
Hosmer-Lemeshow χ^2 (df)	42.38 (8)			<.001***		12.48 (1)			0.13		14.01 (11)			.08^	
N	413					413					413				

^a Compared against Europe Middle East and Africa region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline.

Note: ^ .05 < p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

5.6.2.2 *SCN Moderator*

Second, among the subset of status-holders only the pattern of indicators of SCN Moderator status was explored using the same procedure previously described. Status regressed on the model of non-performance indicators was a poor fit for the data (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 42.38$, $df = 8$, $p < .001$). Although the analysis of this model should not continue, once again it is notable that gender became a significant indicator of status – but in the negative direction ($B = -1.13$, Wald = 4.83, $p = .03$); in other words, among status-holders only, men were 68% less likely than women to be SCN Moderators ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.32$). The only other noteworthy change was that neither North America nor Asia Pacific Japan regions remained significant indicators of status (both $p > .70$ *n.s.*).

Considering only the association of performance and SCN Moderator status, the model fit the data adequately (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 12.48$, $df = 1$, $p = .13$ *n.s.*). For the subsample, only 2010-11 persisted as significantly associated with the status outcome; both 2009-10 performance and pre-2009 performance reputation lost statistical significance (both $p > .05$). Moreover, the direction of association between Contest Year 2010-11 performance and SCN Moderator status changed such that for the sub-sample, each additional performance badge cut the likelihood of SCN Moderator status by more than half ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.47$). In other words, acting in the community-network at the high status of SCN Moderator was not associated with higher performance in the same Contest Year.

When SCN Moderator status was regressed on the combination of non-performance indicators and performance, the model again represented a good fit for the data (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 14.01$, $df = 11$, $p = .08$ *n.s.*). The model for the

subset reflected a few important differences from the complete model for the overall sample. First, as discussed above, gender became a significant indicator of SCN Moderator status, such that males were one-third as likely as females to hold this form of status ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.31$). Next, this overall model indicates that neither Asia Pacific Japan regionality, nor tenure, nor pre-2009 performance remained significant status indicators. Finally, presenting at a conference during Contest Year 2010-11 became significantly associated with status ($B = -0.75$, Wald = 5.28, $p = .02$) – such that conference speakers were half as likely as others to hold SCN Moderator status ($\text{Exp}(B) = 0.47$). This finding is as surprising as the above result for performance, and it suggests that the construction of status might be different among those who hold at least one form of status versus for the wider population.

Mediation Analysis. Perhaps performance played a role in altering the effect of non-performance indicators on likelihood of holding SCN Moderator status. The parsimonious model satisfies Step 1 of the Baron & Kenny (1986) procedure for gender, tenure, and all non-SAP employer types. As discussed above, in this subsample only 2010-11 Contest Year performance meets the Step 2 significance requirement. In Step 3, performance in 2010-11 remains a significant indicator of SCN Moderator status. During a consideration of each eligible non-performance indicator in turn, the only candidate that did not remain significant after holding constant performance was tenure ($B = 0.15$, Wald = 3.42, $p = .06$ *n.s.*); however, the ΔB was only -0.03, and the coefficient did not reach zero. Therefore, performance partially mediated the relationship between tenure and SCN Moderator status.

Table 26: Binary Logistic Regression (DV = SAP Mentor) among Status-Holders Only

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i> (<i>B</i>)	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Non-Performance Correlates															
Gender	-0.08	0.57	0.02	0.89	0.93						-0.16	0.57	0.08	0.77	0.85
North America Region ^a	0.77	0.43	3.26	.07 [^]	2.16						0.69	0.43	2.55	0.11	2.00
Asia Pacific Japan Region ^a	-1.76	0.60	8.70	<.01**	0.17						-1.71	0.60	8.01	<.01**	0.18
Latin America Caribbean Region ^a	-0.60	0.91	0.44	0.51	0.55						-0.27	0.92	0.08	0.77	0.77
Tenure	-0.08	0.09	0.69	0.41	0.93						-0.12	0.10	1.51	0.22	0.89
Partner Employee ^b	2.72	0.52	27.53	<.001***	15.22						2.59	0.53	24.26	<.001***	13.32
Customer Employee ^b	1.86	0.44	18.22	<.001***	6.44						2.00	0.45	19.73	<.001***	7.38
Independent Employee ^b	4.51	0.81	31.09	<.001***	90.83						4.29	0.81	27.69	<.001***	72.76
Other/Unknown Employee ^b	-0.62	1.12	0.31	0.58	0.54						-0.77	1.16	0.44	0.51	0.46
Conference Speaker	2.71	0.40	45.57	<.001***	14.96						2.70	0.41	42.55	<.001***	14.85
Performance															
2010-11						0.06	0.12	0.22	0.64	1.06	-0.09	0.17	0.29	0.59	0.91
2009-10						0.19	0.12	2.52	0.11	1.22	0.21	0.17	1.62	0.20	1.24
Pre-2009						0.20	0.08	6.17	.01*	1.22	0.12	0.11	1.21	0.27	1.13
-2 Log Likelihood	208.36					363.47					203.40				
Nagelkerke pseudo-R²	0.57					0.09					0.59				
Hosmer-Lemeshow χ^2 (df)	13.18 (8)			0.11		4.80 (1)			0.78		1.73 (11)			0.99	
N	413					413					413				

^a Compared against Europe Middle East and Africa region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline.

Note: [^] .05 < p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

5.6.2.3 *SAP Mentor*

Finally, the associations between indicators, performance and SAP Mentorship among only high status SAP Community Network members were examined through utilising the same systematic regression procedure. Overall, the most striking finding is that the relationships of the non-performance indicators to SAP Mentor status were the same in both the parsimonious model and the complex model for the subsample as in the larger sample; that is, the pattern of non-performance predictors did not change on closer inspection of status-holders only. Although this finding could be considered the null hypothesis of a comparison test, it is surprising given the results for the other two forms of status.

Conversely, the associations between performance and SAP Mentor status lost statistical significance in the simple model (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 4.80$, $df = 1$, $p = .78$ *n.s.*) – except pre-2009 performance, which remained significant ($p < .01$). Moreover, performance at all three time intervals lost statistical significance (all $p > .20$ *n.s.*) in the combined model (Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 1.73$, $df = 11$, $p = .99$ *n.s.*). In other words, for the subsample of individuals who held at least one form of status, performance was unrelated to SAP Mentorship either directly or as a mediator for non-performance indicators.

The regression analyses for the full sample and the status-only sample, as well as the results of the mediation tests, are summarized in Table 27 (following).

Table 27: Summary of Regression Results

Sample <i>N</i> = 2498								Sub-sample <i>N</i> = 413					
	Performance 2010-11	Performance 2009-10	Performance pre-2009	Status Overall	SCN Topic Leader 2010-11	SCN Moderator 2010-11	SAP Mentor 2010-11	Performance 2010-11	Performance 2009-10	Performance pre-2009	SCN Topic Leader 2010-11	SCN Moderator 2010-11	SAP Mentor 2010-11
Non-Performance Correlates													
Gender								✓+	✓+			✓-	
North America Region ^a													
Asia Pacific Japan Region ^a	✓-	✓-	✓-	✓-		✓-	✓-						✓-
Latin America Caribbean Region ^a	✓+	✓-	✓-					✓+	✓-	✓-			
Tenure	✓-	✓+	✓+	✓+		✓+		✓-		✓+			
Partner Employee ^b		✓+	✓+			✓-	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+		✓-	✓+
Customer Employee ^b						✓-	✓+	✓+			✓+	✓-	✓+
Independent Employee ^b		✓+	✓+			✓-	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+		✓-	✓+
Other/Unknown Employee ^b	✓-		✓+			✓-		✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓-	
Conference Speaker	✓+	✓+	✓+				✓+		✓+	✓+			✓+
Performance													
2010-11				✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+				✓+	✓-	
2009-10				✓+		✓+	✓+					✓+	
pre-2009				✓+		✓+	✓+						

^a Compared against Europe Middle East and Africa region baseline.

^b Compared against SAP employer baseline.

✓+: Persistent (after mediation) significant positive

✓- : Persistent (after mediation) significant negative

5.7 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Table 27 (above) summarizes the results of Sections 5.3 and 0. Taken together, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 reveal a split result for the exploratory hypotheses proposed in Section 2.8. First, prior performance predicted contemporary performance (Hypothesis 12) and status (Hypothesis 11) as expected in Section 2.8.3.1. Contemporary performance also predicted status in line with extant literature (Hypothesis 13). These findings confirm the Status Characteristics Theory perspective that competence and its ensuing expectation of high performance are indicative of high status; the present research thus successfully extended this theory into the electronic network of practice context.

Second, the present research argued (Section 2.8.2.3) and demonstrated that awards are associated with higher subsequent performance (Hypothesis 10) and downstream status (Hypothesis 9). Accolades are a classic achieved status characteristics and, as such, represent a good test of the mechanism of status allocation. This result adds to present knowledge by clearly differentiating performance from achievement markers (Hypothesis 10). The current project proposed (Section 2.8.2.2) that employer type should also function as an achieved status characteristics (Hypothesis 7), which was supported by evidence that an employing firm's relationship to other firms in the network of practice affected the individual employee's status allocation. The more central to the host firm, the higher the individual's performance in the knowledge community (Hypothesis 8) – except among those working at Customer firms. In general, the present results reveal a strong advantage for SAP employees at all levels of status attainment except the highest, i.e., SAP Mentors. Instead, it is likely that the SAP Community Network governors have reserved this rank strategically in order

to reward exploration (March, 1991) – an alternative explanation that will be discussed in Chapter 6.

In addition to accolades and employer type, tenure was also anticipated (*v.s.* Section 2.8.2.1) to function in status allocation as an achieved status characteristics and, thus, to increase both status (Hypothesis 5) and achievement, i.e., performance (Hypothesis 6). Results revealed a small, statistically significant but practically insignificant negative association between longer tenure and performance – providing no support for Hypothesis 6. In addition, there was no association between longer tenure and higher status – as had been expected from theory and Hypothesis 5 – at any level except SCN Moderator, for whom tenure is a prerequisite for selection. This finding is contrary to theory that expects enduring group membership to increase the drive for social distinction and resultant status allocation. It is possible that both large size and high turnover in the electronic network of practice membership counteracted any cohort effect that would have produced that expectation. The result that longer tenure did not increase performance is also unexpected from human resources literature and practice. It is likely that the SAP Community Network culture that champions contributions to and engagement with the electronic network of practice prizes recent behaviour (*v.s.* Hypothesis 13) to the exclusion of advantages conveyed due to time or survival. In other words, quantity of membership is not as important as quality. However, it is also possible that the surprising behaviour of tenure could have resulted from its consideration as an achieved status characteristic. Instead, perhaps tenure behaves more akin to age, which literature treats as an ascribed status characteristic because it cannot be effortfully acquired (cf. distinction as explained in Section 2.6.1).

Third, the present research challenged the arguments from Status Characteristics Theory that ascribed status characteristics such as gender and geographic location would affect status in the focal organization in such a way as to reflect the prestige order prevailing in the wider societal context. Specifically, the reasoning developed in Section 2.8.1.1 highlighted a cultural contingency inherent in an electronic network of practice that would change the mechanism of status allocation such that gender would control neither improved performance (Hypothesis 2) nor higher status (Hypothesis 1); the present results support this argumentation. Similar proposals were offered for geographic location (Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4), both of which held for all regions except Asia Pacific Japan – a discrepancy which will be addressed in Section 6.4.2. Overall, these results demonstrate that the meritocratic culture of an electronic network of practice “turned off” the determinism of ascription in status allocation – in favour of performance.

This exploratory investigation delivered a variety of results that addressed many conversations in status theory and the literature on communities of practice. Some results confirmed prevailing theory (Hypotheses 9-13), and extended it into a novel organizational context. Other results (Hypotheses 7-8) added to the understanding of which individual properties contribute to status judgments, and how performance impacts the path from status antecedents to status allocation (Hypothesis 14). Still other results contradicted theoretically-grounded predictions in expected (Hypotheses 1-4) and unexpected (Hypotheses 5-6) ways. Table 28 summarizes and Chapter 6 discusses all of these findings.

Table 28: Results Summary

Hypothesis	Antecedent	Outcome	Prediction		Result
1	Gender	Status	No Effect	No Effect	Supported
2	Gender	Contemporary Performance	No Effect	No Effect	Supported
3	Geographic Location	Status	No Effect	Mixed Effect	Partial Support
4	Geographic Location	Contemporary Performance	No Effect	Mixed Effect	Partial Support
5	Tenure	Status	Increase	No Effect	Not Supported
6	Tenure	Contemporary Performance	Increase	Decrease	Not supported
7	Employer Type	Status	Decrease	Decrease	Supported
8	Employer Type	Contemporary Performance	Decrease	Decrease	Partial Support
9	Accolades	Status	Increase	Increase	Supported
10	Accolades	Contemporary Performance	Increase	Increase	Supported
11	Prior Performance	Status	No Effect for Topic Leaders; Increase for SCN Moderators and SAP Mentors		Supported
12	Prior Performance	Contemporary Performance	Increase	Increase	Supported
13	Contemporary Performance	Status	Increase	Increase	Supported

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

“Sapere aude. Dare to be wise; dare to know.” - Horace, via Immanuel Kant

6.1 OVERVIEW

The present research sought to address a gap in the literature and consider how status is allocated in an increasingly-prevalent organisational form, the electronic network of practice. Specifically, this research endeavoured to understand how individuals in large, geographically-distributed, non-face-to-face supra-organisational community-networks use varied cues about individual characteristics and performance in order to calculate a target’s status and then to order the target by rank in a relevant, legitimate hierarchy. Moreover, the investigation of status in the electronic network of practice at the core of the software firm SAP (i.e., the SAP Community-Network) expanded the literature on status theory to a context in which uncertainty, and not clear signals, was the norm. Given the novelty of this research, an exploratory approach was appropriate. The present research successfully achieved the research objectives within the boundary conditions specified and provides a critical foundation for future research. Moreover, these results should inspire future avenues for testing and expanding theory in this emerging field.

6.2 REVIEW OF FINDINGS

The first research objective queried the existence of a status structure and its origins. A significant period of participant-observation identified at least three different levels of status – i.e., SCN Topic Leader, SCN Moderator, and SAP Mentor – for which a tournament operated. It became apparent that some status ranks (e.g., SCN Topic Leaders) emerged bottom-up from the inherent drive for social comparison and status

differentiation; other status ranks (e.g., SAP Mentor) were instituted and managed top-down in order to elicit desired behaviours in line with the sponsor organisation's strategic goals. Additional status ranks (e.g., SCN Moderator) were an artefact of necessary electronic network of practice governance that inferred status from the observed consequences (namely, influence and access to resources) typically associated with status in the traditional sociological literature. Moreover, the DELPHI Method and AllOurIdeas.org, both novel applications of methods outside status theory to questions regarding status allocation, provided mutually-confirming evidence to reveal that all three ranks of status were considered to be legitimate and desirable by electronic network of practice members. The present research enjoyed widespread consensus of this finding. As a result, literature concerning status in organisations must consider the origin of the status hierarchy during the evaluation of whether and how extant status theory applies.

The second research objective investigated the above-established status structures in order to ascertain how status was allocated. Specifying the precise algorithm by which to combine ascribed status characteristics, achieved status characteristics, and performance for the allocation of status is outside the scope of the present research; nevertheless, the present research was able to draw some relevant conclusions. First, in a potential challenge to the attenuation principle that functions in Status Characteristics Theory, status characteristics that belonged to a logical grouping (such as gender and geographic location as representative of ascribed status characteristics) did not behave as a set; in this example, there were inconsistent effects within the levels of geographic region and across geography and gender. Second, the strength and direction of effects for achieved status characteristics and performance sufficiently diverged to confirm the existence of a true distinction between them, and evidence that both achievement and performance contribute to the allocation of status

in organisations. Revised theory must account for both considerations during status allocation.

The third research objective explored whether the determined status allocation process differed for different levels of status. As discussed in Chapter 5, there is reason to believe that the route to status where previously there was none might function differently than either the maintenance or the enhancement of existing status. Perhaps status allocation is a special application of Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), whereby a “Busy Middle” endeavours to gain more status and simultaneously defend against increases from those below actors that have yet to gain any status. Moreover, not all types of status enjoy clarity beyond the nearest social comparisons for the target to ascertain exactly where she or he ranks in the hierarchy; thus, it is possible that alters’ considerations of the target’s ascribed characteristics, achieved characteristics, and performance could vary based on those values for alters themselves. If the status allocation mechanism were different for entry-level compared with other types of status, then such a result could explain Merton’s observation of a “ratchet effect”. In addition, evidence that there is something special about the mechanism that moves status from “0” to “1” would support the Mertonian (1968) “Phenomenon of the 41st Chair” (*v.s.* Section 2.3.4), which is an issue heretofore understudied in status theory. Section 6.3 will explore the consequences of these results for both scholarship and management practice.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

“The test of originality for an idea is not the absence of one single predecessor, but the presence of multiple but incompatible ones.” - Nassim Nicholas Taleb

6.3.1 Theoretical Contributions

The present research found the following results. First, this investigation confirmed an unambiguous, verified outcome of status. This finding represents a strong contribution to status research, which struggles to achieve such unity. Many status research projects employ experiments among graduate student populations, which are randomized to high/low status conditions engendered by merely informing a subject of his/her relative status (e.g., Bendersky & Shah, 2013; Hays & Bendersky, Under review). Thus, those studies have lower external validity than does the current research, which used a multi-method approach to identify and then confirm a unified status structure in an extant organization. Moreover, this status outcome has its basis in the original foundation of prestige (see explanation in Section 2.4.3), and not dominance (viz. Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a; O'Brien & Dietz, 2011; Ridgeway, 1987; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986). The current research approach thus departs from Social Dominance Theory-based conceptualizations (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius et al., 2004) that embed status in power, and which have occupied a majority of recent publications.

Second, the present research leveraged a research design that does not confound status antecedents with a status outcome. In other words, the research model clearly avoids an endogeneity problem by disambiguating the inputs from the outputs of status. This approach makes an important contribution to status research, which can conflate the consequences of influence with both the state of status and the drivers of that state. Moreover, resolving issues of endogeneity is a major challenge for management research outside the status literature (e.g., Chenhall & Moers, 2007; Hamilton & Nickerson, 2003; Semadeni, Withers, & Trevis Certo, 2013).

Third, the present research results demonstrate the differential impact of status characteristics on status enhancement. This variation was shown within a cluster – when gender had no consistent effect but geographic region did (i.e., ascribed status characteristics) and tenure had a consistent effect but employer type did not (i.e., achieved status characteristics) – such that these logical groupings cannot be argued to behave collectively. This finding is in direct contrast to the Status Characteristics Theory argument that characteristics of a similar type convey similar status information. The differential impact of status characteristics additionally occurred between previously ostensible clusters. Ascribed status characteristics had no effect for anything other than Asia Pacific Japan regionality; achieved status characteristics had persistent effects for most inputs other than Unknown employer. Given that the mediator explains how status characteristics impact status enhancement, the indicators’ differential relationship to performance further evinces that status characteristics with similar origins do not necessarily behave as a block, and demonstrates that additional similar information is not subject to the attenuation principle.

Fourth, the current investigation revealed a fundamental boundary condition for status characteristics to impact status allocation: that limit is performance. The explanatory power of the individual’s status characteristics lies in the system itself because the indicators must be related to shared group values in order to contribute to status allocation. In other words, status inputs are instrumentally, not inherently, valuable. Only controlling for performance permits the isolation of a status characteristic’s contribution to a status outcome. This result is best observed in the instance of tenure: traditionally argued to contribute status information in context similarly as in the overall population, the present research showed that tenure had no effect on status over and above the contribution of performance.

Finally, these results establish that achieved status characteristics and performance are separate indicators with differential effects on status allocation. Although the increased information asymmetry and uncertainty of the electronic network of practice context increased the relevance of achievements and contemporary performance (as discussed above in Sections 1.1 and 2.7), the latter was more powerful for status allocation compared with the temporally-distant markers of success, i.e., accolades and prior performance. This finding contributes to a vibrant, current theoretical discussion that considers when Mertonian Matthew Effects occur (e.g., Azoulay et al., 2012, 2014; Bothner, Haynes, Lee, & Smith, 2010; Bothner et al., 2011) and also the relationship between status and quality (cf. Bendersky & Shah, 2012; Lynn, Podolny, & Tao, 2009; Washington & Zajac, 2005). Primarily, this theoretical contribution challenges a prevailing perspective that argues for perpetual returns to initial high status (even by association). Instead, the present results suggest much more adjustment to previous status judgment anchors than the canonical decision-making literature (e.g., Tversky & Kahneman, 1992) would anticipate; contemporary research (e.g., Epley & Gilovich, 2001; Epley & Gilovich, 2006) is investigating similar lines of enquiry.

In these five significant ways, the present research has improved knowledge of the nature of status and the mechanism of its allocation. Furthermore, this research has exposed the limitations of, and then proposed amendments to, the theoretical foundations of the status literature; the present conclusions draw credibility from the union of emergent theoretical developments in a few core literatures. These contributions to such a functional theory in organizational behaviour will have exciting implications for its application in modern organizations.

6.3.2 *Practical Contributions*

Evidence from the present research suggests that organizational structure and culture can influence the process of status attainment in an electronic network of practice. Specifically, the research found that the multiple routes to status operating within one organization are not necessarily in competition with each other. In the focal electronic network of practice, only one-eighth of individuals who had a high status position of at least one type also achieved all three of the highest possible ranks (see Table 10). In addition, the pattern of status indicators involved in the allocation of status was different for each hierarchical level (see Table 27 and Table 28). For a traditional organization, this pattern explains the value in deploying both a “top seller” rank hierarchy (here analogous to the “SCN Topic Leader”, i.e., performance-based status) and an “employee of the month” recognition system (here analogous to the “SAP Mentor”, cf. status-based performance), where designees are selected from a shortlist of nominees who possess certain criteria and demonstrate certain behaviours.

As argued above (in Section 2.1), the facilitation of different routes to status should have positive consequences for the motivation and retention of organizational members, particularly because the type and the interval between awards are both on a variable schedule. Cross-cultural human resources research already has engaged with selection and promotion that are not driven through achievement, as in Southeast Asian “tiger” economies (e.g., Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1997). It is possible that employees selected through different methods, such as salaried versus contracted employees, might respond differentially to status incentives.

One surprising result of the present research is the potential for strategic application of status structures, specifically by an organization and generally in electronic networks of practice. If anti-social organizational behaviours (also known as

counterproductive work behaviors; Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997; Griffin & Lopez, 2005; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002; Spector & Fox, 2002; Warren, 2003) are anti-commercial, then rewarding (with high status) prosocial behaviours and (with high performance recognition) high effort both should have positive consequences for corporate performance. Given the difficulty of defining organizational citizenship behaviours (cf. Organ, 1997; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983), a well-matched reward would be equally intangible; status is one such example (see discussion in Section 2.1). The results from the present investigation support the consideration of status as a reward for boundary spanning (Tushman, 1977) and category spanning (Negro & Leung, 2013), and a source of non-technical spillovers (cf. Melville, Kraemer, & Gurbaxani, 2004; Owen-Smith & Powell, 2004) – all of which positively affect organizational performance.

Another context in which the present research might alter management practice is in the culture of entrepreneurship and its investors. One relevant observation from Silicon Valley is the “exit introduction” whereby a previously unknown individual’s legitimacy information (i.e., quality signals and certifications) and status are first conveyed through the prices at which he/she exited (e.g., received funding in exchange for equity, sold, listed publicly, or quit) previous firms. This narrative reduces the importance of tenure, emphasizes accolades and performance, and excludes ascribed status characteristics. It is likely that this accounting already reflects the reality of status in organizations with high informational uncertainty, as explained previously. Moreover, it is possible that the status of an individual who has left an organization might reflect his/her status allocated while embedded in that organization – perhaps in an extended halo effect (as addressed above in Sections 2.8.2.2 and 2.8.3). Thus, the present findings might help manager selection and retention of top talent from the communities of practice context (Omidvar & Kislov, 2014).

Finally, the present research confirmed that the design of a system necessarily impacts its functioning. This result has important consequences for both scale designers and tournament architects. As in Merton's (1968) "Phenomenon of the 41st Chair", cleaving status/no status based on the criterion of (in his example) group size inserts a rift between Individual 40 (n) and Individual 41 ($n+1$) that is not reflective of status characteristics, merit, or other material difference. In other words, the division between "have" and "have not" is more meaningful after, not before, the intervention. This methodological challenge features across approaches, such as the issues inherent in categorizing a continuous variable (e.g., "median splits"; MacCallum, Zhang, Preacher, & Rucker, 2002). Status hierarchies should employ logical structures that reflect intrinsic distinctions between previously revealed levels of status, and not artefacts of the system's design.

6.4 LIMITATIONS AND BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

"That so few now dare to be eccentric, marks the chief danger of our time." - John Stuart Mill

6.4.1 Conceptual Issues

The primary criticism of the present research is that, as with leading contemporary research in the field (cf. Bianchi et al., 2012), these results demonstrate only the outcome of status allocation and overall status generalizations, and not the internal social psychological processes driving the result. This constraint can be compared to survey data that captures only attitudes and not their realisation in behaviours, and to observational studies that necessarily cannot address either motivations or mechanisms for the action data. Expressly, that additional level of information was outside the intended scope of the present research.

Research that further specified the algorithm for status allocation would endeavour to understand the process that person-perception assessors utilise to combine a target's status characteristics in order to construct status (cf. Pearce & Xu, 2010), and then allocate weightings that reflect the relative contributions of each characteristic (Bunderson, 2003b; Bunderson & Barton, 2011). Foundational status theory (Berger et al., 1972; Berger et al., 1977) claims that status allocation is subject to the principle of attenuation, whereby additional, confirmatory information has a decreased effect on a target's overall status (Berger et al., 1983). However, status characteristics may interact or even conflict within an individual. Such discrepancy occurs when an additional piece of information runs counter to expectations from the individual's determined status; this situation is termed a "status inconsistency" (Bacharach et al., 1993; Berger, Balkwell, Norman, & Smith, 1992), and the literature provides no rule for its inclusion in the allocation of status. When such an interaction or conflict occurs, Blau (1964, 1977) argued that ascribed characteristics are more powerful determinants of status than are achieved characteristics. Conversely, Berger and colleagues (Berger et al., 1977; Berger et al., 1980) acknowledged that although lower ascribed status might yield fewer opportunities to earn achieved status, achieved cues are stronger status determinants due to the relevant task performance expectations. The tension persists regarding the determinism of ascribed and achieved characteristics for status allocation, and invites future research towards its resolution

A second potential limitation of the present research is the conceptual overlap between achieved characteristics and performance. Although distinctly defined in Section 2.8.2.3 and throughout the empirical investigation, the lay understanding of "achievement" and "success" is conflated. In many ways, this core distinction maps onto the division between "status" and "reputation".

As identified in the partial nomological network that delineates the present research's scope (Section 2.3), reputation is a correlate of status. Moreover, a reputation tradition (Ferris, Blass, Douglas, Kolodinsky, & Treadway, 2003) can be established similarly to, yet distinct from, other literatures such as power (Foucault, 2000; Gioia & Sims, 1983), identity (Hochwarter, Ferris, Zinko, Arnell, & James, 2007), trust (de Cremer, Snyder, & DeWitte, 2001), legitimacy (Rao, 1994), inclusion (de Cremer & Tyler, 2005) and ultimately social order (Conte & Paolucci, 2002) in status. Reputation is constructed from others' evaluations (cf. de Cremer & Sedikides, 2008; Sakamoto et al., 2010) because "single impressions serve as building blocks of overall reputation," (Anderson & Shirako, 2008, p. 231). One perspective on reputation focuses on the process — not content — of perception transmission (Paolucci et al., 2009) and the effect of enabling, enacting, and transmitting a global or averaged social evaluation by an agent of a target (Shenkar & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1997). Furthermore, "reputation is not only a phenomenon of individual estimations and beliefs, but also a phenomenon of collective attributions, evaluations, and constructions," (Hahn et al., 2007, p. 2) – of judgments of "technical acumen and managerial skill," (Fleming & Waguespack, 2007, p. 165).

Therefore, reputation is defined as "the complex combination of salient personal characteristics and accomplishments, demonstrated behaviour, and intended images presented over some period of time as observed directly and/or reported from secondary sources," (Ferris et al., 2003, p. 215). Rindova and colleagues (Rindova et al., 2007) identify four components of reputation (cf. Wong & Boh, 2010): salience (i.e., degree of variegation from the herd); prominence (i.e., visibility); exemplary social distinctiveness (i.e., esteem); and favourability (i.e., the ratio of positive to negative evaluations). These map closely but not entirely onto the four properties of status as delineated in Section 2.4. Social comparison highlights the similarities across the target

individual and peers (indicating the salience of one's differences); visibility and prominence above are defined to be interchangeable (Rindova, Williamson, Petkova, & Server, 2005); prestige reflects the increased regard that high-status individuals enjoy (i.e., exemplary social distinctiveness); and centrality indicates the favourability of the individual's status rank as most connected (Anderson & Shirako, 2008). Thus, as argued here and in §2.5.2, the related definitions of reputation and status together with the partial overlap of their components require clear theoretical boundaries. The present research achieved this by operationalizing status as a rank in a hierarchy, and the research affirmed this distinction through the qualitative fieldwork described in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, as with achievement and performance, it cannot be confirmed that the lay understanding that permeates the electronic network of practice holds to the same conceptual differentiation, especially across language boundaries (Neeley, 2013). Therefore, the present research tempers its findings with this caveat and proposes that future research examines the construct validity of status as distinct from reputation.

6.4.2 Empirical Issues

The present design was inspired in part by recent research (Bianchi et al., 2012) that delineated its geographic regions by areas that served as proxies for high-tech hubs, such as "Silicon Valley" and "Cambridge, UK". Given that the present investigation did not use location detail beyond country of registration, it could not replicate exactly those findings. Moreover, the geographic business regions selected themselves are limited in their explanatory power; for example, "Asia Pacific Japan" attempts to address mainland China, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Australia. Instead, a more appropriate representation of electronic network of practice business ecosystems would carve the globe according to the following taxonomy: North America; Latin America, Caribbean, Central America; South America; Western Europe; Central

Europe; Eastern Europe; the Middle East; North Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa; Central Asia (including Russia); South Asia and the Indian Subcontinent; Southeast Asia; China, (South) Korea, Japan; Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Rim. This would create a 14-way comparison (instead of the 4-ways involved in the present research), adding more dimensionality but losing a single, logical reference category.

As described previously, a panel of judges identified the gender of unknown individuals based on names in cultural context. However, the judges were not asked to solve known (i.e., supported with external information) gendered names; evaluating such ratings would have provided a good measure of judges' accuracy. In addition, the judging pool might have featured a wider age-range of judges (the present judges were aged 27-40), in order to capture variability beyond one sociological generation; such information might then encompass the shift of "Dana" (for example) from a predominantly male name to a majority female name.

The conclusions from the empirical investigation could have been strengthened had the design incorporated information about activity level to separate "the signal from the noise". The number of days since an individual's last login to the SAP Community Network was intended to be used as an indicator of both activity level and organisational commitment. However, the data were of poor quality (e.g., the minimum number of days since last login was 52 – highly improbable at the end of the performance contest period) and therefore dropped from the analysis. It is possible that the same lurking cause for the mis-recording of the login dates could have affected the profile creation dates and the subsequent calculation of tenure that was used in the present investigations. However, use of the profile created during participant-observation cross-referenced against research notes, as well as confirmation of individual joining dates with both interview and DELPHI participants, excludes such a

problem with confidence. Design improvements could include additional, dual-source measures of visibility (such as number of new posts per month or frequency of identification via name-generator questionnaires) to capture this dimension of status.

6.4.3 Design Issues

The present research suffered from two key design flaws that were insurmountable with the data available. First, the group of ascribed characteristics did not include race/ethnicity – which is the second-most frequently studied in status research. As with gender information, even after coding in binary “White/non-White” (following precedent from post-colonial theory), it was extremely difficult to judge from non-photo name information, and noisy to judge from visual information in photos. Information about race would have provided a more robust examination of whether ascribed characteristics cling together as a group, and also whether this variable would have a different effect at different levels of status. However, given that gender had no significant effect on the allocation of status across the sample as a whole (see Table 28), it is likely that in a context such as the SAP Community Network for which race is not specifically salient, the same meritocratic principles would suggest similar results for ethnicity as for gender – that is, no effect on the allocation of status.

Second, the Performance data prior to the two immediately previous Contest Years was available only in one block, “pre-2009”. This created time chunks of unequal size, and specifically where that one block could have conflated up to 7 years’ performance effects. However, given that Performance pre-2009 behaved similarly as did Performance 2009-10 in both the main sample and the sub-sample (barring two instances where the effect did not persist after mediation), this information deficiency is not anticipated to impact significantly the results trend.

6.4.4 Causal Issues

Despite data for performance across many years, without status information (i.e., the DV) across years, a full longitudinal design was not possible. Therefore, conclusions about causality are limited, as is making prescriptions for a “formula” for high status. One full longitudinal investigation would test whether Performance at $t_1 \rightarrow$ Status at $t_2 \rightarrow$ Performance at $t_3 \rightarrow$ Status at t_4 . This design would examine the effect of one’s high status on one’s own subsequent performance (viz. Bothner, Kim, & Smith, 2012). Moreover, it would enable the investigation of both a success cascade and a ratchet effect for status hierarchies. A more basic longitudinal design would include at least one more Contest Year’s status information (in the first instance, 2009-10; then each previous year as matched to the Performance year-1). A more complex longitudinal design also would capture each year’s geographic location, specific employer and employer type, and conference activity in order to isolate the effects of these types of status information from the effects of the changes in that information. However, inasmuch as one status type (i.e., SCN Topic Leader 2010-11) was not determined until the end of the focal time period and the other status levels (i.e., SCN Moderator 2010-11 and SAP Mentor 2010-11) could be considered fixed within the focal time period, an effect of time was outside the boundary conditions of this model. Therefore, the lack of longitudinal observations and relevant causal conclusions is not a fatal flaw; instead, these provide fruitful avenues for further investigation.

6.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

“Greater is the merit of the person who facilitates the accomplishments of others than of the person who accomplishes himself.” - Rabbi Eliezer

6.5.1 Addressing Limitations

The design of the present research developed a “wishlist” for more and richer data than were available from the case organisation (SAP). If all members of the electronic network of practice provided in their member profiles an accurate and current job title, then this information could be used to approximate job level and function as an additional achieved characteristic. If the semi-annual membership survey had matched individual participants with their responses, the “Net Promoter Score” that captures whether an individual would recommend that his or her colleagues pursue membership in the electronic network of practice, then could be used as a proxy for turnover intention – a staple variable in organisational research that might increase the generalizability of the findings. Similarly, an individual’s “percentage completeness” of his/her SAP Community Network member profile could be used to measure organisational commitment to the electronic network of practice.

One major contribution of the present research suggests that the calculus of status allocation might be different for entry-, mid-, and upper-echelon levels of status within a hierarchy. To explore this conclusion further, SAP Mentor Candidate and SAP Mentor Alumnus are two additional variables that could be introduced to the analyses across time in order to parse the model. First, due to both the overall selectivity and the specific capacity controls of the SAP Mentor Initiative, candidates commonly fail to gain membership during their first nomination cycle only later to join the patricians. Given the significant and varied expertise that nominees for SAP Mentorship must possess, Merton’s “Phenomenon of the 41st chair” likely is operating. SAP Mentor Candidate would capture in a binary variable individuals who were highly visible but

currently not in service as SAP Mentors during the Contest Years in focus and who were in service after then.

Second, the SAP Mentor Initiative grew with the size and the strength of the overall SAP Community Network and, in 2011 (Howlett, 2011), a group of the longest-serving SAP Mentors decided to end their participation in that role. For reasons both personal (e.g., the “old guard” deemed it appropriate to make room for the “young blood”) and professional (e.g., the responsibilities of an SAP Mentor and the demands on his or her time became too onerous), individual SAP Mentors independently and collectively resigned this privileged position in favour of resuming active membership among the general SAP Community Network and SAP ecosystem. These SAP Mentor Alumni (see Appendix 12) instead could be called the “Cincinnatus Circle”. Named for Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus (520 BC - 430 BC) – a beloved if short-termed *Magister Populi* of Rome whose refusal of near-absolute power inspired George Washington – this group of outstanding leaders rejected perpetual high status in the service of the community good. However, as the DELPHI Method and AllOurIdeas.org results clearly indicate, this action primarily has served to create a supergroup with equal or greater status compared to the continuing SAP Mentors. In the lifecycle of a star, SAP Mentor Alumni unintentionally have morphed from red giants into red dwarfs. An additional binary dependent variable could encompass the group of SAP Mentor Alumni who announced publicly on the SAP Community Network blog (Finnern, 2011b) an intention to quit the Initiative, any time from 2010 through the present, whereby each exit would be indicated as a “1”, and each continuation as a “0”. This group would be a subset of SAP Mentors in any given Contest Year. In addition, a continuous variable for the duration of SAP Mentor status (i.e., “SAP Mentor Tenure”) could be calculated as the number of days from accession to exit; these values would be expected to display a stepped distribution. Of course, both of these additional dependent variables would require longitudinal panel data – as acknowledged in §6.4.4.

6.5.2 *Extending Applications*

As with any exploratory investigation, replication and extension are necessary in order to cement the proposed advancements to status theory into the organisational literature on status. Primarily because SAP is a software firm, the present research would benefit from an additional case study conducted in a non-IT peer organisation that uses electronic networks of practice – such as the nurses’ professional virtual community (Ridgeway & Correll, 2006). This paired context would help examine whether the status criteria applied by judges in non-traditional organisational contexts (such as the present research) is more varied (Bunderson & Barton, 2011) than is the set from traditional organisational environments. It would also increase the generalizability of electronic networks of practice as a valid organisational form independent of the high-technology industry.

Second, some research (e.g., Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a; Thye, Willer, & Markovsky, 2006; Willer, 2009) contends that more prototypical group members are rewarded for their strategic alignment to group norms and goals with higher rank in the status hierarchy. However, given the demonstrated power of the status drive and status-striving motivations, would individuals who (experimentally) were allocated a higher status rank become more prototypical? Answering this question would have implications for the treatment of new entrants to an electronic network of practice, and particularly would challenge the current practice of earning status allocation from baseline zero. Perhaps status allocation could function similarly to the AllOurIdeas.org tool, whereby new entrants are ranked at 50% of the maximum – based on no *a priori* judgment of their status value – and must endeavour to keep and to improve that ranking.

6.5.3 *Expanding Theory*

Although the present research considered a mediation hypothesis explaining the route of ascribed characteristics and achieved characteristics to status through performance, additional potential moderation hypotheses are not yet involved in this research program. In one example, perhaps the pathway between performance and status progresses differently across the independent variable groupings. That is, are the independent variables universally or contingently important? In a second example, it is possible that the results suggest a bias such that higher performance yields higher status more easily for one group of indicators (for instance, employer type) than for another group of indicators (in one case, geographic location). In yet another theoretical expansion, perhaps the mediation of the present research in fact is part of a moderated-mediation latent in the research context and as-yet absent from the revisions to status theory. All of the above provide inspiration for additional research into status allocation in electronic networks of practice.

A second direction of future research concerns whether the dependent variable of “status” indeed represents a unified construct. Active engagement in the SAP Community Network is directly associated with status gain because – excepting those SAP Mentors chosen for their significant offline contributions and/or those with strategic potential for SAP – cultivated membership in the online community-network with demonstrable experience in topics or community governance and coupled with reputation for performance are the minimum requirements for selection as SCN Topic Leader or SCN Moderator, respectively. Evidence of this split trend identifies a potential distinction of types of status, previously unaddressed in the literature. First, there is a straightforward type of status that follows as reward from effort, as described in Expectancy Theory. This type of status is metric-based, and its conferral is transparent. The population that gains this type of status frequently is self-identified –

for example, employees who join a sales division that operates a status tournament for “Sales Leader” in a set time period (usually quarterly or annually). Status of this type can be termed “Absolute Status”. The SAP Community Network examples of this type of status are the SCN Topic Leaders and SCN Moderators.

In addition to Absolute Status, organisations operate status systems with mechanisms for gain that are less straightforward. As Merton (1968) recognised, the systems typically operate a short list of other-identified players in the status tournament whose selection might be revealed only by their success. Those who gain this type of status demonstrate strategic alignment and value-addition as well as expertise. Organisational examples of this “Discretionary Status” include non-key performance indicator (KPI) related “Employee of the Month” awards, sports team captains, and university provost selection. In the SAP Community Network research context, “Discretionary Status” is represented in the SAP Mentor Initiative and the monthly Member Spotlight. Additional research such as that proposed herein – as well as the longitudinal investigation proposed above – should make major contributions to parsing the nomological network of status with evidence for its construct validity.

6.6 CONCLUSION

“Our names are labels, plainly printed on the bottled essence of our past behavior.” - Logan Pearsall Smith

This dissertation commenced in order to address a gap in the organisational literature that neglected to consider status theory as thoroughly as do other literatures (i.e., sociology and social psychology), nor had advanced the study of status into the era of globalised, distributed work. The present research met and exceeded both of those goals through five distinct, original contributions. First, research evidence identified an unambiguous, unified structure of status – providing powerful clarification against its cognate constructs. Second, the present findings challenged the attenuation principle as a cornerstone of Status Characteristics Theory by suggesting that additional, similar status information might not contribute less to the calculus of status allocation. Third, observations from the present research indicate that the factors which effect status allocation differ depending on the level of status being determined. Fourth, the present research revealed that to the extent that status characteristics affect status allocation, they do so through the mechanism of performance. Fifth, the present analyses confirmed the distinction between accolades and performance, which provides both opportunities for and limitations to the Mertonian Matthew Effect. Thus, the status literature has been advanced significantly through the present research.

“Cuius rei demonstrationem mirabilem sane detexi hanc marginis exiguitas non caperet.

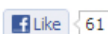
I have a truly marvelous demonstration of this proposition which this margin is too narrow to contain.”

- Pierre de Fermat

Appendix 1: Introduction to the SAP Community Network (SCN)

Learn Using SAP Community's Rich Expert Content Version 8

created by [Palm Norchoovech](#)  on 22-Feb-2012 06:20, last modified by [Sylvana Chang](#) on 12-Nov-2012 18:05

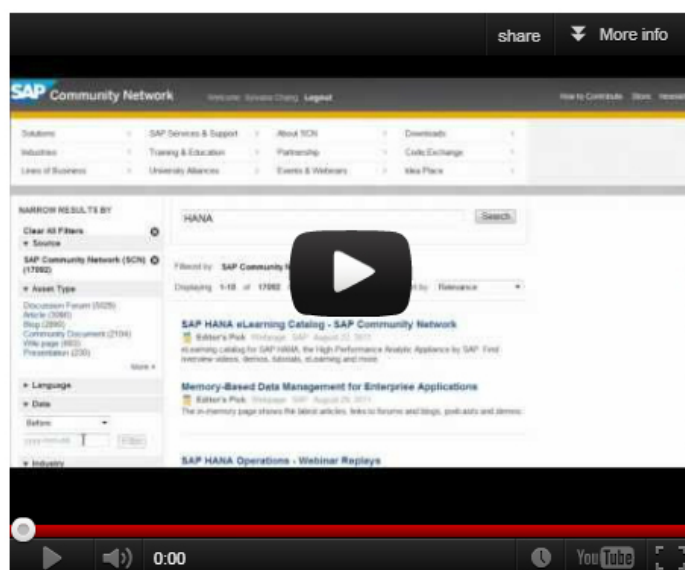


SAP Community Network is the social network for SAP professionals. It has over 200,000 assets help you to find answers, solve challenges and boost your knowledge. We know that learning is one of the most popular reasons for users to visit [scn.sap.com](#). Here's what members say about it:

"...everyone cannot know everything and in SAP there are enough things to learn till the end of your career. It is only the will to do it that is required... SCN is a great source to start..." - Ravishankar Ramamurthy

"SCN is the first choice of all SAP Expert and beginner. Through SCN where beginners gain their knowledge and preparing great career and expert is sharing their experiences" - Raheem Baksh

"SCN had been the main resource for me as a consultant, add a lot of value for me to help me serve my clients better" - Ying Sun



Here are four major learning tools that we encourage you to explore to GET STARTED...

1. **eLearning Videos:** explain features in learning scenarios and show video demonstrations
2. **Articles:** technical articles including whitepapers addressing the best solution for industry-specific scenarios.
3. **Blogs:** personal experiences, strategies, and insights shared from SAP Community Network members & experts
4. **Discussions:** ask questions and give answers to enhance learning and develop your SAP skills

Community Network and successful learning from our tools and your peers.

22292 Views  Tags: [getting_started](#), [new_scn](#), [community](#), [welcome](#), [active_contributor_badge](#), [learning](#), [how_to](#)

3

³ All screenshots are © SAP AG and used with kind permission. All images are © Martin Gillet and used with kind permission.

Appendix 2: Data Storage & Use Compliance

Dear Ms. Maguire,

As agreed, here is a summary of the provisions I take to guard sensitive information to which this researcher is privileged:

- I began my research as a participant-observer in the SAP Community-Network (SCN), from when I was governed by a User Agreement as is any other public member.
- In November 2010, I was granted access as an external consultant, from when I have acted according to SAP AG's "Confidentiality and Privacy Statement V1.4".
- For each stage of data collection from *individuals*, I have received Informed Consent, which has included standard assurances regarding researcher ethics and data protection.
- Regarding data collection and processing:
 - Where possible, I use the SAP-provided Citrix client to access organizational, panel data.
 - Files, directories, and the computer used are each secured with different passwords (representing three levels of security).
 - To the best of my knowledge, data backups to The Cloud are stored under password (provided by me) and encrypted (by the provider). You and I have discussed confirming this policy.
 - Until data collection is complete, files use personally identifying information in order to link records; then, cases will be assigned a random unique identifier (RUI) to replace the sensitive information that is irrelevant to my research.
- Regarding data analyses:
 - The above continue to apply.
 - In the present research, the level of analysis is not focused on behaviors of individuals but rather patterns of behavior and aggregate trends.
 - The total set of variables is so comprehensive that I cannot guarantee the impossibility of the effortful deduction of identity. However, as much as possible, individuals will be anonymized via the RUI variable.

- Regarding the presentation of results:
 - The above continue to apply.
 - Where necessary to apply research evidence at the level of the individual, standard anonymity practices will apply – including, but not limited to referencing by the RUI number or general description (e.g., “a third-year middle manager from Sheffield reports ...”).
- Regarding the protection of economically competitive information:
 - A copy of the penultimate thesis draft will be provided to SAP AG approximately one month before final submission to the LSE. This period of review will permit SAP AG to highlight material (if any) suitable for additional safeguarding, potentially including redaction and exclusion.

I would be grateful if you would re-confirm that these strategies satisfy the mandate for reasonable precautions for the safeguarding of personal information, and also that you are happy with my approach to the collection and analyses of my Ph.D. thesis data. If you have any revisions or additions, please provide them to me, and I will send you an updated text to approve. I will include as an appendix to my doctoral thesis the final copy of my data protection plan.

With thanks and kind regards,

Sarah M. G. Other

3 May 2012

Ph.D. Thesis Data Protection Strategies

Maguire,RE <R.E.Maguire@lse.ac.uk>
To: "Other,SM (pgr)" <S.M.Other@lse.ac.uk>

Wed, May 9, 2012 at 5:12 PM

Dear Sarah,

Your document looked fine to me and I see no reason to suggest any changes. If you want me to look at it again when you are closer to submission, I am happy to do so.

Regards,

Rachael

From: sarah.other@gmail.com [mailto:sarah.other@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Sarah M. G. Other
Sent: 03 May 2012 13:03
To: Maguire,RE
Subject: Ph.D. Thesis Data Protection Strategies

[Quoted text hidden]

Appendix 3: Research Ethics

Statement of Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Thank you for your assistance with my research! Academic research relies on volunteers like you. Please read the short introduction that follows, and then provide your consent to participate.

Management: The present research is part of doctoral-level studies in Management as supervised by Dr. Emma C. Soane, London School of Economics, and is conducted with the support of SAP AG. The principal investigator (PI) is Sarah M. G. Otner, who can be reached at sarah.otner@sap.com.

Purpose: The study is part of ongoing research in Organizational Behavior. The responses collected here will influence the analyses of otherwise-collected data. The results of the present and future investigations may be published in appropriate academic (e.g., peer-reviewed journals), professional (e.g., SCN), and public (e.g., university news service) channels.

Topic: The present research examines reputation, status, and influence, and attempts to answer: (1) Why, how, and on whom is status conferred in the SCN?; and (2) on which status characteristics to members rely when awarding status in the SCN?

Collection and Use of Information: Participants consent to the administration of surveys necessary for the collection of primary data, and to the retrieval of relevant archival and/or secondary data. Information collected during this investigation will be analyzed and reported anonymously and in aggregate.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

Rights: Participants maintain the right of refusal, i.e., a participant may quit the research study at any point without consequence. Participants are entitled to a copy of the research results, upon request made of the PI.

Compensation: No inducement to participation is offered for the present study. The results will be provided to the host organization (SAP AG), and specifically to the SCN Collaboration Team, for its internal development and the improvement of its services.

-
- I am over the age of consent (18, or as applicable locally).
 - I have read the above disclosure statement and freely consent to participate in the present research.

(Electronic) Signature of Participant: _____

*[Responding to the electronic survey instrument **includes an implicit consent** to these stipulations.]*

Appendix 4: Sample e-Interview Transcript

About You:

- Name, Age, Country of Residence, Native Language
- [redacted]
- Role in the SAP ecosystem
 - o Do you work for SAP?
 - No, I am a NetWeaver Technician for [redacted]
- Length of membership to SCN
 - o Several years ~5.
- Link to your SCN business card:
 - o [redacted]
- Link to your SCN blog (threads):
 - o [redacted]
- Do you currently serve as a Mentor? If not, have you ever been a Mentor? If not, would you like to be a Mentor?
 - o Yes, SAP Mentor since 2009.

About Your SCN Experience:

How would you explain SCN to someone unfamiliar with the community?

The SCN is an online collaboration space where everyone is encouraged to share intelligence about all things SAP. There are resources for Developers, Business Process Experts, Business Intelligence, University alliances and Community powered Online solutions.

All SCN members are encouraged to learn all they can from forums, white papers, weblogs or online tutorials. The improvement of the community is achieved by all people contributing to the collective pool of knowledge.

What do you receive from your SCN membership, and how?

Apart from an online tool to provide answers, guidance, innovation and cost savings for all things SAP, I am using the SCN as a platform to establish myself as a [Topic] Leader in the area of Application Lifecycle Management.

What do you contribute to the SCN community, and why?

There is a sense of personal satisfaction when you contribute enough to be noticed in a community of over 2 million online users. I also use the opportunity to further my reputation, and the reputation of my company in the industry. Nothing is more satisfying than establishing myself and [redacted] as a thought leader in the SAP community.

About Reputation & SCN:

On SCN, what is reputation? How do members learn this definition?

The SCN recognition points program is the primary mechanism to establish reputation on SCN. Points are awarded for participation in online forums or for the authoring of a weblog or the for sharing code. There are several status levels from Active Contributor (250 points) to Top Contributor (a leader board of all SDN contributors).

What are you known for within SCN? What is your “claim to fame”?

I consider myself a thought leader in the field of Application Lifecycle Management (or Solution Manager). I have authored one weblog a week on this topic for the last 7 weeks. I have amassed over 650 points this year and I am placed in the top 25 on the Top Contributor leader board.

What is the value of SCN to you? What are some examples that demonstrate this?

My company rewards contribution on the SCN. If you make Active Contributor (250 points) in one year, you achieve a personal KPI. If you mentor another colleague to do the same you also achieve another personal KPI.

What is the value of you/your contributions to SCN? How is this exhibited?

After my second or third weblog, I was approached by an SAP ALM product manager who offered me some unreleased documentation for implementation of a new Solution Manager feature for my company. After implementing this new feature, I wrote a weblog to share my experience with the SAP Community. You can read about this in the following weblog: **-[redacted]**

The number of encouraging comments and the hit counters on my ALM Teaser series are proof that my contributions are appreciated and encouraged. This week my ALM weblog Teaser series are showcased on the main SCN launch page – a great advertisement for myself and **[redacted]**.

What do you think of the SCN recognition system?

- *Do you think the points awarded per activity accurately reflect your contribution?*
 - o Yes
- *Do you think the points awarded per activity accurately reflect your effort?*
 - o Yes
- *What is the strongest part of the program? What would you keep, and why?*
 - o The advice and encouragement you receive from fellow web bloggers and moderators. I have had several kind words from SCN giants like Marilyn Pratt, Craig Cmeheil, Mark Finnern, Jim Spath, Martin Lang and even Mark Yolton.

- *What is the weakest part of the program? What would you change, and how?*
 - Possibly the web blogging tools should be more adaptable to the various types of media being used to share information.
- *Do you actively manage your reputation? If so, what do you do to grow it? How do you prevent it spoiling?*
 - I keep my LinkedIn profile current
 - I follow and learn from industry thought leaders on Twitter
 - I update my skills by reading and performing tutorials on SCN
- *Why do you think SAP introduced the community-wide points challenge, rewarded with charitable donations?*
 - This is progressive thinking on SAP's behalf. It has provided even more incentive for my SCN contributions

About SCN Extensions:

Do you attend the annual SAP TechEd conference?

- Yes. I have attended the last 5 SAP TechEd events.
- *How does your SCN activity connect to your activity at TechEd and/or other meetings?*
 - I meet up with other Top Contributors and SAP Mentors on Community day.
- *If not, why not? How else would you like to connect with SCN members?*

What do you think of the integration between SCN and LinkedIn bios?

- Excellent, this feature was long overdue.
- *What direct benefits have you experienced from this initiative?*
 - This feature establishes you as a true SAP professional to recruiters and customers alike. This would come in handy should I wish to become a freelance contractor, or should I seek new employment.
- *Have you experienced any negative consequences?*
 - Recently we had some weblog theft. Others stealing intelligence from SCN and parading it as their own.

Do you currently (or have you ever) participated in the SCN Career Center?

- *If so, why did you join? What did/do you expect to gain from your membership? What have been your results? Would you recommend this service to others?*
 - o I have had a look and recommended to several SAP recruitment companies in [redacted].

Everything Else:

We are keen to have your input in order to tell the story of value creation in the SCN community! Please feel free to comment on anything and everything else about your SCN experience.

I have been an SAP practitioner since the late 1980's. We used to get SAP information in hardcopy manuals, tapes, floppy disks and later on as print files on a CD-ROM. Now we are blessed with a decent search engine and collection of intelligence from SAP and customers in a common area - SCN.

These days I can find an answer to a problem on SCN faster than I could if I reported it through the official SAP escalation channels.

As I have depended on, and benefited from intelligence on the SCN over the years, I thought it was time to put something back into the community. Over the last 12 months, I have authored over 15 weblogs – and I'm not done yet.

THANK YOU!

Sarah M. G. Otner, Ph. D. Candidate 

<http://personal.lse.ac.uk/otner>

<http://openid.sap.com/SMGOtner>

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THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Appendix 5: The DELPHI Method



the London School of **Economics**
and **Political Science**

Welcome to The DELPHI Method - Round 1!

You are part of a small group of experts who have been selected for their knowledge of, and contributions to, the SAP Community Network.

This project is part of doctoral research conducted at the London School of Economics with the support of SAP. The Principal Investigator is Sarah Otner (sarah.otner@sap.com). Please review the "Statement of Informed Consent" that was provided with your invitation to participate. Responding to the electronic survey instrument includes an implicit consent to these stipulations.

The DELPHI Method can be thought of as a focus group that is conducted with one individual at a time. In order to achieve this, experts answer individually and privately to the Principal Investigator via this short electronic survey. The PI analyzes and aggregates the results; then, she reports the consensus to the group. Finally, panelists then revise their answers in light of other members' replies. This constitutes one "round". Typically, groups reach a meaningful consensus within three rounds.

Additionally, each round will feature a few open-ended questions and an opportunity to provide feedback. Your responses to these prompts will help to improve both subsequent phases of research and the SCN experience. We encourage you to engage freely and creatively!

This survey is conducted confidentially. We ask that you do NOT reveal your involvement and do NOT discuss your contributions until after ALL rounds of the process have been completed and the Principal Investigator has cleared you to do so. This measure is necessary to preserve your individual responses and insulate them from external influences; it is what distinguishes The DELPHI Method from a typical focus group or survey.

This round takes 10-15 minutes to complete (subsequent rounds will be significantly shorter). Round 1 begins on Wednesday, 3 August, and closes at 12:00 BST on Wednesday, 10 August.

[Start Survey!](#)

The DELPHI Method - Round 1

Page 1 - Heading

A status characteristic is "any recognized social distinction that has attached to it widely shared beliefs about at least two categories, or states, of the distinction," (Bianchi et al., 2011, p. 1); in other words, status characteristics are those features whose possession confers advantages and whose lack confers disadvantages or punishments.

Page 1 - Question 1 - Ranking Question [Mandatory] [Randomize]

Considering the above definition, please order the following status characteristics according to their relevance in the SCN, descending from "most relevant" to "least relevant".

SAP Mentor Alumnus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conference / Event Presenter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Featured on SCN Homepage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SAP Mentor Role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Moderator Role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job Level / Occupational Title	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Points Total	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geographical Area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thought Leader Award	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tenure in SCN (i.e., From Date Joined)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Good Citizen" Behaviors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SAP Employee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Top Contributor Award	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work Experience (Number of Years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Badges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Topic Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of Successful Projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Fluency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(Formal) Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-English Fluency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
User Group Membership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Certifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee at Partner Org.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page 2 - Heading

A status characteristic is "any recognized social distinction that has attached to it widely shared beliefs about at least two categories, or states, of the distinction," (Bianchi et al., 2011, p. 1); in other words, status characteristics are those features whose possession confers advantages and whose lack confers disadvantages or punishments.

Page 2 - Question 2 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Considering the above definition, are there any other status characteristics that should be considered? That is, which other (if any) bases of status function in the SCN?

Page 2 - Question 3 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Would you make a distinction between "status" and "expertise" (in the SCN)? If so, what? Or if not, why not?

Page 3 - Heading

About You

Page 3 - Question 4 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Full Name

Page 3 - Question 5 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

E-mail address to which you received your invitation

Page 3 - Question 6 - Open Ended - Comments Box

Preferred (e.g., SCN) e-mail address (if any)

Page 3 - Question 7 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Transgendered

Page 3 - Question 8 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Age Range

- ☐ 16-20
- ☐ 21-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 31-35
- ☐ 36-40
- ☐ 41-45
- ☐ 46-50
- ☐ 51-55
- ☐ 56-60
- ☐ 61-65
- ☐ 65+

Page 3 - Question 9 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Primary Nationality/Passport-Issuing Country

Page 3 - Question 10 - Open Ended - Comments Box

Country of Residence

Page 3 - Question 11 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Nearest Major/International Airport (e.g., FRA, Dallas/Ft. Worth)

Page 3 - Question 12 - Open Ended - Comments Box

Primary Language (if not English)

Page 4 - Heading

About Your Qualifications

Page 4 - Question 13 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Highest level of formal education completed

- ☐ None
- ☐ High School
- ☐ 2-year Degree (e.g., Associate)
- ☐ 4-year Degree (e.g., Bachelor's)
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Professional Degree (e.g., J.D., M.B.A.)
- ☐ Doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., M.D.)
- ☐ Other

Page 4 - Question 14 - Open Ended - Comments Box

Please list any certifications (SAP training or otherwise) that you consider relevant.

Page 4 - Question 15 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Work Experience (approx. number of years)

Page 4 - Question 16 - Open Ended - Comments Box

Approx. number of successful major projects (individual or collaborative)

Page 4 - Question 17 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Employing Organization (including SAP)

Page 4 - Question 18 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Occupation / Job Level / Job Title

Page 4 - Question 19 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Are you an active member of an SAP User Group?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Page 4 - Question 20 - Open Ended - Comments Box

If "yes", which?

Page 5 - Heading

About Your SCN Membership

Page 5 - Question 21 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Approximately when did you join SCN?

Page 5 - Question 22 - Open Ended - Comments Box

Link to SCN Business Card

Page 5 - Question 23 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

To which topic area(s) do you primarily contribute (e.g., SOA, University Alliances, Business Objects)?

Page 5 - Question 24 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Points Earned in SCN Last Year (August 2010 - July 2011)

Page 5 - Question 25 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Were you recognized as a Top Contributor (i.e., earned 250+ points a 12-month period)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, but not in the period August 2010 - July 2011

Page 5 - Question 26 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Did you earn any other badges for your contributions (August 2010 - July 2011)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, but not in the period August 2010 - July 2011

Page 5 - Question 27 - Open Ended - Comments Box

If "yes", which?

Page 5 - Question 28 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Were you recognized as a Thought Leader last year (August 2010 - July 2011)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, but not in the period August 2010 - July 2011

Page 5 - Question 29 - Open Ended - Comments Box

If "yes", in which discipline (e.g., ABAP, BPX)?

Page 6 - Question 30 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Are you currently serving as an SAP Mentor?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other, please specify

Page 6 - Question 31 - Choice - One Answer

If "no", have you ever served as an SAP Mentor (i.e., are you a Mentor Alumnus)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other, please specify

Page 6 - Question 32 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Are you currently serving as a Moderator?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Page 6 - Question 33 - Choice - One Answer

If "no", have you ever served as a Moderator?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Page 6 - Question 34 - Choice - One Answer [Mandatory]

Have you ever presented at a conference or major event (e.g., Inside Track, TechEd, SAPPHIRE)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not yet, but I will present before 31 December 2011
- ☐ Other, please specify

Have you ever been featured on the SCN (e.g., Community Spotlight)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not yet, but I will be featured before 31 December 2011
- ☐ Other, please specify

Feedback

Please use this space to provide reactions, comments, etc. that you would like shared with your expert peers, as part of The DELPHI Method.

Please use this space to continue discussing status in the SCN with the Principal Investigator only.

We welcome your feedback on the design of the DELPHI tool (n.b. future rounds will be significantly shorter!).

Although the DELPHI group membership is anonymous to each other, whom do you think is participating with you? In other words, please identify whom you consider an SCN expert.

Please remember: We ask that you do NOT reveal your involvement and do NOT discuss your contributions until after ALL rounds of the process have been completed and the Principal Investigator has cleared you to do so.

The DELPHI Method - Round 2



the London School of **Economics**
and **Political Science**

Welcome to The DELPHI Method - Round 2!

Thank you for your continued participation in The DELPHI Method, and for your ongoing support of this research.

Please remember: This survey is conducted confidentially. We ask that you do NOT reveal your involvement and do NOT discuss your contributions until after ALL rounds of the process have been completed and the Principal Investigator has cleared you to do so. This measure is necessary to preserve your individual responses and insulate them from external influences; it is what distinguishes The DELPHI Method from a typical focus group or survey.

You will be presented with the expert group's consensus results of the previous round; then, you will be provided the opportunity to ADJUST some of your previous responses in light of this new information. This round also features two different open-ended questions - use your creativity!

Round 2 takes 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey opens on Friday, 12 August, and closes at 23:00 BST on Thursday, 18 August.

Page 1 - Heading

About You

Page 1 - Question 1 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Name

Page 1 - Question 2 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

E-mail address to which you received your invitation

Page 2 - Heading

Ranking of Status Indicators

Below are indicators of status in the SAP Community Network, descending from most to least relevant, as judged by your expert peers in Round 1. "SAP Mentor Alumnus" and "Featured on SCN Homepage" were valued equally, and this tie was broken by considering the range of positions that each achieved. A similar procedure was followed for the tie between "Number of Successful Projects" and "User Group Membership". In addition, "Good Citizen" Behaviors and "Work Experience" were valued similarly (but not equally), as were "Badges" and "Certifications".

Round 1 Rankings

Most Relevant Status Characteristic: SAP Mentor Role, SCN Moderator Role, Top Contributor Award, Conference/Event Presenter, SAP Mentor Alumnus, Featured on SCN Homepage, Thought Leader Award, Points Total, SAP Employee, "Good Citizen" Behaviors, Work Experience (Number of Years), Tenure in SCN (i.e., From Date Joined), English Fluency, Badges, Certifications, Job Level / Occupational Title, Topic Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP), User Group Membership, Number of Successful Projects, Employee at Partner Org., (Formal) Education, Geographical Area, Least Relevant Status Characteristic: Non-English Fluency

What surprises you most about this list?

How well do you think this reflects your SCN experience?

DELPHI experts would like their group members to know the following:

"Being an SAP expert and an SAP recognizable name are not always the same thing."
 "SCN promotes the importance of collaboration and helps individuals transform their personality." "SAP status in many cases creates divisions. People forget they too were once learning."

Considering your expert group's responses, please order the following status characteristics according to their relevance in the SCN, descending from "most relevant" to "least relevant". For your reference, the definition of a status characteristic is reproduced below.

SAP Mentor Alumnus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conference / Event Presenter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Featured on SCN Homepage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SAP Mentor Role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Moderator Role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job Level / Occupational Title	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Points Total	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geographical Area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thought Leader Award	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tenure in SCN (i.e., From Date Joined)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Good Citizen" Behaviors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SAP Employee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Top Contributor Award	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work Experience (Number of Years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Badges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Topic Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of Successful Projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Fluency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(Formal) Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-English Fluency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
User Group Membership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Certifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee at Partner Org.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page 4 - Heading

A status characteristic is "any recognized social distinction that has attached to it widely shared beliefs about at least two categories, or states, of the distinction," (Bianchi et al., 2011, p. 1); in other words, status characteristics are those features whose possession confers advantages and whose lack confers disadvantages or punishments.

Page 5 - Heading

The Relationship between Status and Expertise

DELPHI experts are divided as to the relationship between status and expertise in the SCN. Four (4) respondents believe that they are the same, and one suggested that "expertise" be added to the list of status indicators. However, others believe that status is something members "build in the SCN" whereas expertise is "real life". And although one member asserts that "expertise is absolute", another reminds us that there are "no guarantees for quality".

Page 5 - Question 6 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Given the above, how would you explain to a newbie how the SCN indicates status?

Page 5 - Question 7 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Given the above, how would you explain to a newbie how the SCN signals expertise?

Page 6 - Heading

DELPHI Experts Composition

Contrary to popular belief, the group is NOT all "the usual suspects". The experts DELPHI panel includes 5 User Group members, 8 Top Contributors, 6 SAP Mentors, 3 Moderators, 8 conference presenters, and 10 stars in the Community Spotlight. No Thought Leaders or Mentor Alumni joined the group. In the preceding 12 months, DELPHI experts individually earned between less-than-200 and nearly-4000 points on SCN.

Page 6 - Question 8 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Given the above description, whom do you consider an SCN expert? (Hint: A few specific, well-considered nominations is more revealing than "all of the SAP Mentors".)

Page 7 - Question 9 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Please describe the typical SCN member, referring to relevant status characteristics if desired.

Page 8 - Question 10 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Please describe the ideal SCN member, referring to relevant status characteristics if desired.

Page 9 - Heading

Feedback

Page 9 - Question 11 - Open Ended - Comments Box [Mandatory]

Please use this space to provide reactions, comments, etc. that you would like shared with your expert peers, as part of The DELPHI Method.

Page 9 - Question 12 - Open Ended - Comments Box

Please use this space to continue discussing status in the SCN with the Principal Investigator only.

Page 9 - Question 13 - Open Ended - Comments Box

We welcome your feedback on the design of the DELPHI tool.

Thank You Page

Please remember: We ask that you do NOT reveal your involvement and do NOT discuss your contributions until after ALL rounds of the process have been completed and the Principal Investigator has cleared you to do so.

The DELPHI Method - Round 3

DELPHI experts would like their group members to know the following:

- "I regard SCN contribution as a primarily personal investment." - "There are some indicators in SCN that help with status, but you have to take this into account together with non-SCN factors." - "Your status can be driven by expertise. Your expertise can be driven to a point by your status. However, you need to prove you are good / excellent at what you do." BUT - "This is not a perfect formula. Status means something different to each person." - "Per the SCN definition of expert, you can be an expert by performing Google searches and posting answers to recently asked questions."

Ranking of Status Indicators

On the following page are indicators of status in the SAP Community Network, descending from most to least relevant, as judged by your expert peers in Round 2. Despite 90% of experts reporting that Round 1's list reflected their SCN experience "reasonably well" to "100%", 70% of the status indicators moved at least one (1) position. The average adjustment was two (2) positions, with one indicator - "Tenure in SCN" - downgraded by seven (7) ranks. In addition to "Tenure", "English Fluency" lost relevance significantly; conversely, "SAP Mentor Alumnus" and "Badges" gained relevance significantly.

Round 2 Rankings

Most Relevant Status Characteristic: SAP Mentor Role, SCN Moderator Role, SAP Mentor Alumnus, Top Contributor Award, Featured on SCN Homepage, Conference/Event Presenter, Thought Leader Award, Badges, SAP Employee, Points Total, Work Experience (Number of Years), "Good Citizen" Behaviors, Certifications, Job Level / Occupational Title, Number of Successful Projects, Topic Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP), User Group Membership, English Fluency, Tenure in SCN (i.e., From Date Joined), (Formal) Education, Employee at Partner Org., Geographical Area, Least Relevant Status Characteristic: Non-English Fluency

Compared with the ranking produced in Round 1, how well do you feel the Round 2 list of indicators signals status in the SCN?

The DELPHI Method requires that groups persist until they reach consensus. For the present research, a "consensus" will occur when the resulting ranking is not statistically significant from the previous list.

Therefore, please consider how status is signalled in the SCN another (final?!) time.

Considering your expert group's responses, please order the following status characteristics according to their relevance in the SCN, descending from "most relevant" to "least relevant". For your reference, the definition of a status characteristic is reproduced below.

SAP Mentor Alumnus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conference / Event Presenter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Featured on SCN Homepage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SAP Mentor Role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Moderator Role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job Level / Occupational Title	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Points Total	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geographical Area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thought Leader Award	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tenure in SCN (i.e., From Date Joined)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Good Citizen" Behaviors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SAP Employee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Top Contributor Award	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work Experience (Number of Years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Badges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Topic Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of Successful Projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Fluency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(Formal) Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-English Fluency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
User Group Membership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Certifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee at Partner Org.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

A status characteristic is "any recognized social distinction that has attached to it widely shared beliefs about at least two categories, or states, of the distinction," (Bianchi et al., 2011, p. 1); in other words, status characteristics are those features whose possession confers advantages and whose lack confers disadvantages or punishments.

How would you explain to a newbie the task of the SAP Community Network?

In your understanding, and considering your experience, what resources become available upon achieving status in the SCN?

Feedback

Please use this space to provide reactions, comments, etc. that you would like shared with your expert peers, as part of The DELPHI Method.

Please use this space to continue discussing status in the SCN with the Principal Investigator only.

We welcome your feedback on the design of the DELPHI tool.

Thank You Page

Please remember: We ask that you do NOT reveal your involvement and do NOT discuss your contributions until after ALL rounds of the process have been completed and the Principal Investigator has cleared you to do so.

Appendix 6: AllOurIdeas (AOI) Survey

Invitation to DELPHI Participants:

My Ph.D. research examining status and influence progresses well, thanks to the continued support of and contributions from the always-amazing people of SCN. Over the past month, I have been fortunate to work with a very select group of SCN experts, using a procedure called “The DELPHI Method”. This process is a hybrid of survey methodology and focus groups, which attempts to identify consensus on a topic while avoiding traditional biases or power struggles. The DELPHI experts addressed challenges such as distinguishing between *status* and *expertise*, and defining the *tasks* and *resources* involved in good SCN practice.

Our primary task was to produce a ranking of status characteristics in the SCN, ordered descending from “most relevant” to “least relevant”. (A status characteristic is “any recognized social distinction that has attached to it widely shared beliefs about at least two categories, or states, of the distinction,” (Bianchi et al., 2011, p. 1); in other words, status characteristics are those features whose possession confers advantages and whose lack confers disadvantages or punishments.)

Before I reveal the results of The DELPHI Method (in a future blog!), I would like to invite you to help answer this question via a one-question survey: <http://www.allourideas.org/sapdelphi>

This question – “Which is a more relevant indicator of status in the SCN?” – is the same posed to the DELPHI experts, except that instead of a multi-characteristic list, it employs the pairwise comparison tool of AllOurIdeas.org (a collaboration between Princeton University and Google). There are more than 250 possible pairs, and you may vote as many times as you like (even one vote is helpful!).

I will compare the results from the AllOurIdeas project with those reached by the DELPHI group; thusly testing the new method generally will contribute to social science research, and specifically will help me to understand how the different types of status operate in the SCN.

As always, I am grateful to the SCN Collaboration Team (among others) at SAP for their interest in and support of my research, and to the many members of SCN who make it possible. I love receiving your insightful responses equally to your more contentious contributions (!), and your small messages of encouragement and enthusiasm are huge to me! I look forward to sharing some results – and then learning your feedback! – soon.

Ph.D. research on SCN (feedback to sarah.otner@sap.com). AOI asks you which indicator 'wins' in a random pair. The 250+ pairs are always random; the system does not 'learn'. Vote as often as you like, in one or multiple visits. If you find these indicators insufficient, please 'add your own idea'. Responses are anonymous and immediately aggregated. ✕

Which is a more relevant indicator of status in the SCN?

"Good Citizen" Behaviors















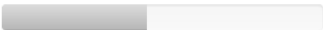
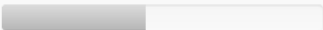
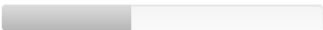
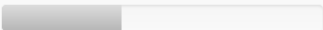
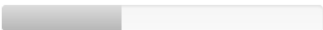
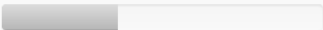
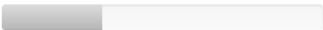
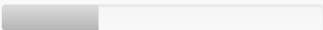
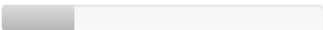
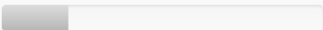
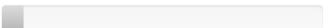
Badges

937 votes on 24 ideas

[I can't decide](#)

Add your own idea here...

Which is a more relevant indicator of status in the SCN?

Ideas	Score (0 - 100) 
SAP Mentor Alumnus Role	 86
SAP Mentor Role	 82
Moderator Role	 78
#Blogs,Articles etc	 74
Top Contributor Award	 72
Thought Leader Award	 68
Featured on SCN Homepage	 66
Conference/Event Presenter	 64
Badges	 56
SAP Employee	 56
# Years Work Experience	 53
# Successful Projects	 52
"Good Citizen" Behaviors	 51
Topic Area (e.g., BPX, ABAP)	 45
Job Level / Occupational Title	 45
Tenure in SCN	 40
Employee at Partner Org.	 37
Points Total	 37
Certifications	 36
User Group (e.g., ASUG) Membership	 31
Education	 30
Geographical Area	 23
English Fluency	 21
Non-English Fluency	 7

Data Visualizations

[Compare uploaded ideas with original ideas](#)

[Word cloud of ideas](#) ⓘ

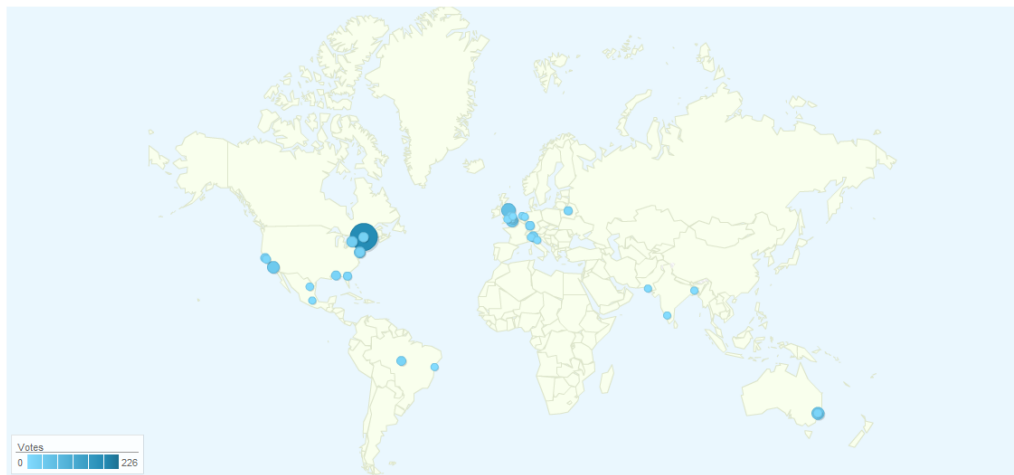
[Word cloud of ideas weighted by score](#) ⓘ

X

user citizen" projects leader **award** certifications points # conference/event title years SCN org. occupational job (e.g., thought
etc english membership abap) work top #blogs,articles **alumnus** geographical total tenure level area topic behaviors contributor bpx,
role partner "good employee badges at successful experience presenter featured fluency education asug) group homepage
moderator mentor **sap**

[World map of all votes](#)

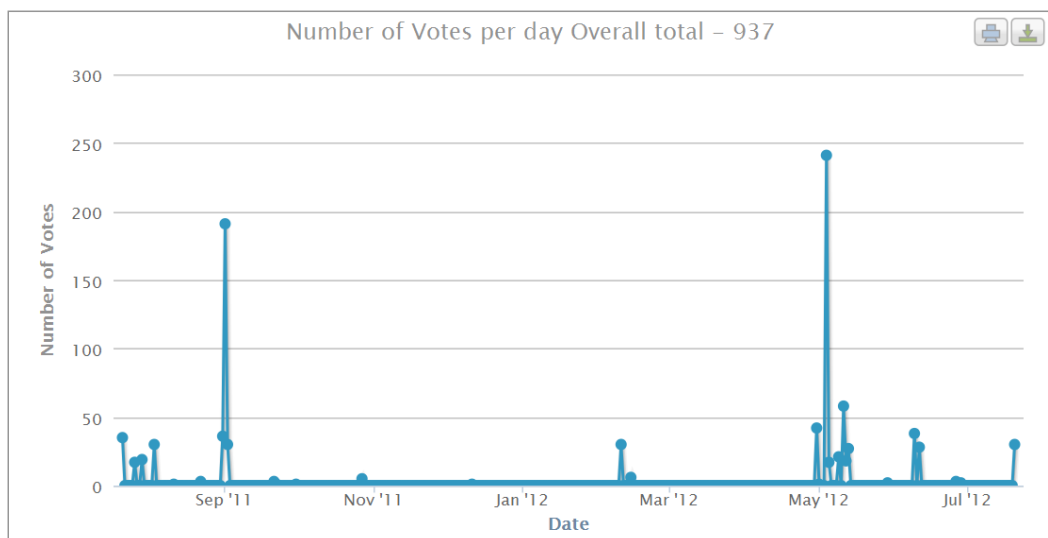
X




Overall total - 937 votes. We were unable to find the location of 69 votes

[Number of votes over time](#)

)



Appendix 7: Sample SAP Community Network (SCN) Profile




Thorsten Franz

☒ Following

Following: 207 Followers: 186

Bio
 Activity
 Content
 Connections
 Places
 Bookmarks
 Reputation


Name: Thorsten Franz
Status Level:  Active Contributor Gold (1,693 points)
Member Since: 08-Mar-2012
Last Logged In: 08-Nov-2012 15:50
Company: [AOK Systems](#)
Company URL: <http://www.aok-systems.de/>
Address 1: Kortrijker Strasse 1
Town/City: Bonn
Post/ZIP Code: 53179
State: NRW
Country: [Germany](#)
Email (alternative): thorsten.franz@sys.aok.de
Industry: [Insurance](#)
Personal URL: <http://twitter.com/thorstenster>
Professional Blog URL: <https://www.sdn.sap.com/irj/scn/weblogs?blog=/pub/u/14831>
Short Bio: I've been an ABAP programmer for years and it's still fun. Lately, I have been working as an enterprise architect, introducing the Composition Environment and NWDL at our company and working on NetWeaver CE-based projects.


 Before that, I was busy creating generic tools for a large application development project, such as a clearing case module for business processes gone wrong.




Areas of Expertise: Enterprise Architecture
 Software Architecture
 SAP NetWeaver Composition Environment
 Java EE 5 application development
 Web Dynpro Java
 Web Dynpro ABAP
 Web Application Server ABAP
 ABAP Objects application development
 Health Insurance
 SAP Financial Services - Insurance
 SAP Policy Management
 SAP Business Partner
 SAP Business Warehouse
 SAP ECC 6.0

Additional Info: SAP Mentor, co-authored the SAP Press Book "ABAP Objects: Application Development from Scratch" with Tobias Trapp.






Tags: [java](#) [development](#) [netweaver](#) [hana](#) [abap](#) [mobile](#) [river](#) [ngap](#) [on-demand](#) [sybase](#) [sup](#)

Badges  SAPMENTORS



Actions

-  [Send direct message](#)
-  [Receive email notifications](#)
-  [Download vcard](#)
-  [Member RSS feed](#)
-  [Track in Communications](#)



Thorsten Franz

Following

Following: 207 Followers: 186

- Bio
- Activity
- Content
- Connections
- Places
- Bookmarks
- Reputation

All Status Updates Only

A Call to Arms for ABAP Developers



Thorsten Franz commented (in response to Graham Robinson)



I couldn't agree more, especially with these points: Your perspective, personal experience and empathy are palpable even in a couple of paragraphs. Please continue to share them as much as possible....

2 weeks ago

in Career Center · 98 comments

Does Innovation Scale? Does Inhibiting Innovation Scale Better?



Thorsten Franz wrote

Vjay Vijayasankar (@vjayassankar on twitter) asks in his recent blog, "Can Enterprise Software Innovation Be Industrialized?" Vjay explains that he used to believe it could, and gives a nuanced...

2 weeks ago

in Technology Innovation · 1 comment

Architecture Alternatives for Transactional HANA Applications - An Overview



Thorsten Franz commented (in response to Pankaj Kumar)



Pankaj, Thanks a lot for your feedback and encouragement! Yes, I agree I had to leave mobility out and it hurt me a bit to have to define the scope of my blog so narrowly. There are many other...

3 weeks ago

in SAP HANA Developer Center · 7 comments

Fabulous SAP TechEd Las Vegas Memories



Thorsten Franz commented

Gail, Thanks for this beautiful recap, which made me relive moments I enjoyed very much (especially the empathy event) and allowed me to share those I missed (DemoJam, which I was happy to spend in...

3 weeks ago

in SAP TechEd · 22 comments

SAP Inside Track NL (#sitNL) - The SAP TechEd XPerience 2012



Thorsten Franz commented

Can't wait to see you again at #sitNL. The event is an annual highlight I won't miss, especially since you folks are so generous to let me do off-topic sessions.

3 weeks ago

Actions

- Send direct message
- Receive email notifications
- Download vcard
- Member RSS feed
- Track in Communications

Thorsten Franz's Blog

Thorsten Franz on SAP technology

Thorsten Franz's Most Liked Content

- 14 Blog It Forward - Thorsten Franz
- 13 Where are you going with Mobile?
- 7 Thorsten's Recap of SAP TechEd 2012 Las Vegas
- 7 Business Value of Empathy? Handling "Difficult" Situations, Turning Crises into Wins
- 6 A Call to Arms for ABAP Developers
- 6 Architecture Alternatives for Transactional HANA Applications - An Overview
- 3 Blog It Forward - Karin Tillotson
- 3 No Pinnacle Award for Communities in 2012...NOT COOL, SAP!
- 2 Get over ABAP Reports, create object-oriented Selection Screens
- 2 Sascha Wanninger - SCN Member of the Month April 2012



Thorsten Franz

Following

Following: 207 Followers: 186

- Bio
- Activity
- Content
- Connections
- Places
- Bookmarks
- Reputation

Authorized

Participated

Following

Thorsten Franz's Blog

Thorsten Franz on SAP technology

All Content Blog Posts Documents Discussions Polls

Type to filter by text

Filter by tag

Sort by latest activity (descending)

1 2

Title	Author	Views	Latest activity
Architecture Alternatives for Transactional HANA Applications - An Overview in SAP HANA Developer Center	Thorsten Franz	6 6 7 1433	October 30, 2012 7:07 PM
Does Innovation Scale? Does Inhibiting Innovation Scale Better? in Technology Innovation	Thorsten Franz	1 0 1 502	October 30, 2012 1:01 AM
Thorsten's Recap of SAP TechEd 2012 Las Vegas in SAP TechEd	Thorsten Franz	7 0 8 6573	October 24, 2012 3:51 AM
Business Value of Empathy? Handling "Difficult" Situations, Turning Crises into Wins in SAP TechEd	Thorsten Franz	7 1 9 6598	October 22, 2012 8:55 PM
Blog It Forward - Thorsten Franz in About SCN	Thorsten Franz	14 1 14 994	August 30, 2012 4:50 PM
Where are you going with Mobile? in SAP for Mobile	Thorsten Franz	13 11 6 3606	July 27, 2012 10:27 AM
Get over ABAP Reports, create object-oriented Selection Screens by Thorsten Franz	Thorsten Franz	2 6 24 947	July 9, 2012 5:18 AM
Speaking about information gathering, preaching about collaboration by Thorsten Franz	Thorsten Franz	0 0 10 51	June 13, 2012 6:48 AM
Calling Function Modules in Parallel Universes by Thorsten Franz	Thorsten Franz	0 0 11 256	June 11, 2012 2:37 PM
Logon groups not visible/usable in SAP NetWeaver Application Server	Thorsten Franz	0 0 4 3104	March 21, 2012 11:36 AM
HANA sandbox: Calculated Measure in Analytical View not working	Thorsten Franz	0 0 2 532	March 13, 2012 8:54 PM



Thorsten Franz

☒ Following

Following: 207 Followers: 186

Bio

Activity

Content

Connections

Places












Bookmarks

Reputation

Following

Followers

Sort by first name 1 2

Person	Followers	Following	Latest activity
 Aastha Mehrotra	24	17	<input checked="" type="button" value="Follow"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Abdul Ayubi	33	220	<input checked="" type="button" value="Follow"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Abdulbasit Gulsen	49	40	Replied (In Response To Markus Greutter) Re: Web Dynpro Explorer: Now layout preview possible (2 weeks ago) <input checked="" type="button" value="Follow"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Abesh Bhattacharjee	73	51	Created Blog It Forward - Abesh Bhattacharjee (1 week ago) <input checked="" type="button" value="Follow"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Aby Jacob	16	75	Created Busting two myths on In Memory Data Management (2 weeks ago) <input checked="" type="button" value="Follow"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Adam Stein	8	16	Commented The Uber Mobile App for Gardening (part 2) (1 week ago) <input checked="" type="button" value="Follow"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Ahmed Yehia	6	40	<input checked="" type="button" value="Follow"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Aleksandra Barilko	78	16	<input checked="" type="button" value="Follow"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Alvaro Tejada Galindo	42	0	<input checked="" type="button" value="Following"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Alvaro Tejada Galindo	126	57	Modified SAP CodeJam Montreal (4 days ago) <input checked="" type="button" value="Following"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>
 Amir Blich	32	33	Commented SAP NetWeaver Portal: Customer Success at <input checked="" type="button" value="Follow"/> <input type="button" value="Settings"/>



Thorsten Franz

Following

Following: 207 Followers: 186

Bio Activity Content Connections Places Bookmarks Reputation

Following

Group Member

Owned Groups

All Places Spaces Social groups
Type to filter by text Filter by tag Sort by latest activity (descending)

SAP HANA Developer Center



Followers

339

SAP HANA Developer Center space on SCN. Find related resources for ...

ABAP Development



Followers

961

ABAP Development space on SCN: a community for learning, sharing, g...

Sub-spaces

7

About SCN



Followers

137

Welcome to SAP Community Network. In this dedicated space you can ...

SAP for Healthcare



Followers

25

Official SAP healthcare industry Community Network homepage.

SAP NetWeaver Application ...



Followers

219

SAP NetWeaver Application Servers are the ABAP and Java Application...

Web Dynpro ABAP



Followers

443

SAP NetWeaver UI technology Web Dynpro ABAP combines the well...

Sub-spaces

1

Business Process Managemen...



SAP NetWeaver Gateway



SAP HANA and In-Memory Bus...



Thorsten Franz

Following

Following: 207 Followers: 186

Bio Activity Content Connections Places Bookmarks Reputation

All Content Blog Posts Documents Discussions Polls Status Update

Type to filter by text Filter by tag Sort by date bookmarked

Architecture Alternatives for Transactional HA...

Native HANA apps, language containers an...

Enter the 2012 SCNotty Awards for SAP TechED ...

Public SAP Mentor Monday Webinar - Is Twitter ...

6 6 7

10 8 12

5 2 13

9 3 6

Blog it Forward - Alan Rickayzen

Blog it Forward - Karin Tillotson

Plumbing SAP's mobile architecture

Where are you going with Mobile?

6 1 8

8 1 12

14 10 17

13 11 6



Thorsten Franz

Following

Following: 207 Followers: 186

Bio

Activity

Content

Connections

Places

Bookmarks

Reputation



Active Contributor
Gold
(1,693 points)
Only 807 points to Active
Contributor Platinum!

Summary

Member Since: 08-Mar-2012
Lifetime Points: 8,672
My Top Communities:

This reputation tab is your window to the Community. You get to shine here and grow your reputation as you contribute quality content on SCN.

[Learn more about the SCN reputation program.](#)

Badges



SAPMENTORS

Recent Points

13-Nov-2012

5 points - Someone rated Thorsten Franz's blogpost [Business Value of Empathy? Handling "Difficult" Situations, Turning Crises into Wins in SAP TechEd](#)

08-Nov-2012

2 points - Someone liked Thorsten Franz's comment [SAP Inside Track NL \(#sitNL\) - The SAP TechEd XPerience 2012 in SAP Inside Track](#)

05-Nov-2012

5 points - Someone rated Thorsten Franz's blogpost [Architecture Alternatives for Transactional HANA Applications - An Overview in SAP HANA Developer Center](#)

2 points - Someone liked Thorsten Franz's blogpost [Architecture Alternatives for Transactional HANA Applications - An Overview in SAP HANA Developer Center](#)

03-Nov-2012

5 points - Someone rated Thorsten Franz's blogpost [Architecture Alternatives for Transactional HANA Applications - An Overview in SAP HANA Developer Center](#)

5 points - Someone rated Thorsten Franz's blogpost [Get over ABAP Reports, create object-oriented Selection Screens in thorstenster's space](#)

02-Nov-2012

2 points - Someone rated Thorsten Franz's blogpost [Why I REALLY attend SAP TechEd in thorstenster's space](#)


2 points - Someone rated Thorsten Franz's blogpost [Why I REALLY attend SAP TechEd in thorstenster's space](#)

01-Nov-2012

2 points - Someone liked Thorsten Franz's blogpost [Thorsten's Recap of SAP TechEd 2012 Las Vegas in SAP TechEd](#)

5 points - Someone rated Thorsten Franz's blogpost [Thorsten's Recap of SAP TechEd 2012 Las Vegas in SAP TechEd](#)

Appendix 8: Participant Observation

**Sarah Otner**Following: 38 Followers: 23

BioActivityContentConnectionsPlacesBookmarksReputation

Name: Sarah Otner

Status Level: Not Active Contributor (20 points)

Email: s.m.otner@lse.ac.uk

Member Since: 09-Nov-2009

Last Logged In: 17-Nov-2012 13:43

Profession: [Student](#)

Company: [London School of Economics](#)

Company URL:

Address 1: 54 Lincoln's Inn Fields

Address 2: Fourth Floor

Town/City: null

Post/ZIP Code: WC2A 3LJ

State: null

Landline Phone: null

Country: [United Kingdom](#)

Mobile Phone: null

Email (alternative): sarah.otner@sap.com

Industry: [Higher Education & Research \(HE&R\)](#)

Instant Messaging Type: [Twitter](#)

Instant Messaging ID: [@SarahOtner](#)




Other Instant Messaging Type: [AIM](#)

Other Instant Messaging ID: null








Personal URL:

Professional Blog URL: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/management/research/phd-students/sotner.aspx>

My Relation to SAP: [public](#)



Actions

-  [Change photo & avatar](#)
-  [Edit profile & privacy](#)
-  [Edit preferences](#)
-  [Download vcard](#)
-  [Change password](#)
-  [Change email address](#)
-  [Change newsletter subscriptions](#)

Appendix 9: SAP Community Network (SCN) Governance

 **SAP Community Network Rules of Engagement** Version 29

created by [Patrick Flanders](#) on 06-Feb-2012 14:52, last modified by [Marilyn Pratt](#) on 17-Sep-2012 19:26

[in Share](#) [+1](#) [0](#) [Tweet](#) [7](#) [Like](#) [7](#)

Rules of Engagement - (or how to behave on SCN)

The Rules can be divided into a number of segments:

- How to behave when **initiating a post** (asking a question, posting a blog, creating a document, starting a wiki page) - not the mechanics but how to behave when doing those actions
- How to behave when **contributing to an existing post** (answering a question, commenting to a blog, adding to a document or wiki page) - again not the mechanics but how to comport oneself
- How to behave in a community in general (**netiquette** and **good community behavior**, language, identity, images, avatars)
- Behaviors that may result in **removal from the community** or **rejection of posts**: point-cheating, defaming another, sexually explicit content, and copyright infringement.

How to Initiate a Post

1. **Search** before you post to be sure that your question, comment, blog, document and/or wiki page is unique and hasn't already been asked, answered or covered in some way
2. **Choose The Correct Space for Your Post** - Examples:
 - Post your discussion questions in the correct forum space
 - Post your blogs in the appropriate topic area
 - Avoid starting a discussion or posting a question as an *unrelated* comment to a blog or document but rather post your questions as separate discussion
3. **Create a Clear Title for Your Posting** – make sure the subject line is clear, unique, topic related.
4. **Do Not Cross-Post**. If a question, blog or document is relevant to multiple topics, post it in the most relevant area and use tags to connect it to other areas. Identical questions that are asked in multiple forums will be deleted. The same goes for redundant announcements, blogs or documents.

How to Contribute to an Existing Post

1. **Read the post** - (blog, query, question, document) **carefully before responding** and make sure that your response is not redundant (is unique) and adds value to the conversation or post. Post with intent to help versus intent to show that you know more.
2. **Make every effort to ensure your own post is correctly written** - (spell-check is now available) but understand that English isn't everyone's first language so be tolerant of others' lapses in spelling and grammar
3. **Ask for clarification, respectfully** - if you believe a question or post you wish to respond to is poorly phrased
4. **Create Context** – a simple link is not enough to answer a forum post, there should be an explanation why this link will be helpful. Similarly in a blog post there should be more than just a link to another blog post or web site.

Good Community Netiquette and Behavior

1. **Identify Yourself Properly** – use your real identity and humanize your own personal brand
2. **Use Your Own Photos** – please use a real headshot, without sunglasses, full face to represent yourself to the community, for copyright reasons no Logos or other graphic content that isn't your own intellectual property. Use those graphics judiciously in blogs, documents and postings
3. **Avoid Slang** – understand that there are many languages and cultures represented in the community. Use language that will be most commonly appropriate. And please avoid **SMS Text Speak**.
4. **Share Your Expertise Transparently and Publicly** - SCN is a community site which encourages public knowledge share
5. **No Solicitations** – avoid marketing your company's products and services. If you wish for people to know your affiliation with your company, put those details **in your profile** and make those attributes accessible and visible to the community. **Do not embed links to ads in blogs, documents, and forum discussions. The same goes for email solicitations and advertising**. Do not attempt to artificially boost your visibility. If you want someone to trust you enough to buy what you offer, share your expertise transparently and publicly. Use that to build a reputation and relationships.
6. **Be Professional and Courteous** - No need to SHOUT (use unnecessary capitalization) or use words in title like URGENT. Most folks participate here because they enjoy helping others, not because it's their job to do so.
7. **Be Responsive** - If your question or problem was answered then please mark the helpful and correct answers as such. Mark the discussion as "Answered" so that other members can find their answers more easily
8. **Click the abuse button** - if you believe the post is inappropriate, offensive or defamatory, and clearly state what fault you found with the posting

Grounds for Rejections of Posts or Removal from the Community

1. **Point-cheating** – Creating, rating, responding to any content for the purpose of increasing one's own or another's points. This includes collaboration with other users to rate content highly, creating "fake" users to rate one's content highly, or any other points motivated activity that does not benefit the community at large
2. **Defaming another** – Posting content that discriminates based on sex, race, religion, sexual preference, etc.
3. **Infringement on copyright** – If after reviewing a submission to the SAP Community Network, we find that some of the material in the document appears to contain inappropriate content, it will be removed on those grounds. As a reminder, the SAP Community Network Terms of Use, found at <http://www.sdn.sap.com/irj/scn/policy>, require that all content submitted to SAP Community Network must be original content created by the author or reproduced with the permission of the content copyright owner. If you want to post on SCN previously published quotations or passages (from print or web sources), illustrations, photographs, or graphics, you must have written permission or license from the content owner.

What to Expect From Moderators

In accordance with the [SAP Community Network Terms of Use](#), we may take some or all of the following actions:

1. Reject your past, current and/or all future submissions
2. Revoke your SAP Community Network membership
3. Delete all of your accumulated points

8006 Views [Tags: discussion_finder](#)

List of Wiki Moderators

 Tools ▾

Added by Mario Herger, last edited by Philipp Freudenberger on Oct 24, 2012 (view change)

Dear Wiki collaborator,

We have prepared a complete list of all Wiki spaces and their Moderators. Please feel free to contact them regarding uploading and modifying content. You may also find out about different ways of becoming a more active member in the Wiki community.

List of Wiki moderators (alphabetical by space):

Space	Moderators
ABAP Connectivity	Frank Mueller
ABAP Objects	Marcelo Ramos
ABAP Development	Aravinda Hedge,Brian Bernard,Bull Chen , Dezso Pap , Janagar Sundaramoorthy Nadar ,Kartik tarla ,Vijay Duda,Marcelo Ramos, Rainer Liebisch,Yaping Gao
Adaptive Computing Controller	Gunther Schmalzhaf,Heidrun Reichart
Application Server Infrastructure	Braemer Achim,Oliver Luik,Oliver Stiefbold , Desiree Matas
ASUG Systems Management	Kristen Dennis
Basis Corner	Eric Brunelle, Juan Reyes , Jim Spath, Eric Van de Catsije ,
Business Intelligence	Prakash Darji ,Jason Cao ,Des Gallagher ,Colin Moloney ,Colum Cronin ,Patricia yang ,J Francisco Fernandes ,Lucimar Moresco ,Windge Chen,Pravender Chauhan,Vikram Srivastava,Simon To,Darius Heydarian, Darius Heydarian
Business Warehouse	Arun Varadarajan,Des Gallagher, Prakash Darji ,Windge Chen, Brian Keenan, Vincent Judge
Business One	Darius Heydarian,Des Gallagher, Prakash Darji,Windge Chen
Business Process Expert	Marilyn Pratt ,Ginger Gatling,Jeffrey Holdeman, Mario Herger, Mario Schoenberg ,Shengtao Tan
Business Process Models at BPX	Mario Schoenberg ,Shengtao Tan
ByD UX Design Club	Daniel Markwig,Michael Krenkler
CDI	Denys Van Kempen
Central Process Scheduling	Astrid Tschense,Oesterle Cristoph,Nake Dieter Babuzyka Ed Wenmakers
Chemical Industry	Kieran O'Connor,Monica Gassmann
Code Exchange	Rui Nogueira
Code Gallery	Michael Nicholls
[Community Profiles]	Craig Cmeil
Connectivity Kits	Jocelyn van Deusen, Markus Schulz, Stephan Kamps ,Ciaran Dowd,Achim Becker,Winfried Thome
Contributor Corner	Gail Kling Schneider
CRM	Dan Arengo, Belen Ramirez,Gregor Wolf,John Burton, Liao Yinjun ,Pan George ,Satyesh Singh, Joaquin Fornas, Hasan Zubairi
Defense	Hans Peukert, Petra Kloess,Martin Janssen,Dante Ricci David Lincourt
Duet	Alexander Puettner,Mirko Buholzer,Xiaosheng Lu
Ecosystem Professionals	Gavin Heaton ,Rich Blumberg

Appendix 10: Contributor Recognition Program (CRP)



Reputation Program Overview

Version 17

created by SAP User on 28-Nov-2011 18:31, last modified by Laure Cetin on 12-Sep-2012 20:32



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Like 1

SAP Community Network (SCN) is a dynamic and diverse community with over 2 million members. Being part of this vibrant, passionate community is like being part of a family. As you become active on SCN, you will grow your knowledge, build an expert reputation and make friends..

Regular participation is important for getting the most out of your engagement within the community. Not only do you receive ongoing feedback and interactive discussions to exchange ideas, being active on SCN is a rewarding experience. To support the experience, we have established a reputation program to measure your activity, thank you for your contributions and recognize you with visibility in the community.

Points and Status:

Points are awarded to you when you contribute, and you receive additional points when community members recognize the value of your contributions by liking, rating (5 stars), sharing etc. The space where you contribute determines the point category. If you regularly contribute, you will increase your chances of being highlighted in the "Top Participants" widget of your space (based on the points in the last 12 months). Note that you are able to contribute in your "Personal Space" as well, but that area does not receive points, and will not show up in search for a specific space topic.

Points are assigned for discussion messages, blog posts, documents (articles, white papers, eLearnings etc) and wiki contributions. More detailed information can be found in the [SCN Reputation Program FAQ](#).

Once you've become a member of SCN, you start accumulating lifetime points. These never expire.

Active Contributors are SCN members who have reached at least 250 points within the last 12 months. As an Active Contributor your level of contribution is highlighted to others with badges assigned to your name:



Active Contributor Bronze: 250-499 points



Active Contributor Silver: 500-1,499 points



Active Contributor Gold: 1,500-2,499 points



Active Contributor Platinum: 2,500 points and above

Any time you reach a new threshold of Active Contributor, you receive an Acknowledgment of Achievement via email. In order to keep a badge, you need steady contribution. Remember that badges are assigned based upon the 12-month rolling point mechanism – not on lifetime points.

Increased visibility

It is important to have visibility in the community. Whether you are an SAP Customer, Partner or Employee, you should take advantage of the opportunity to build your reputation within the community. Becoming an expert has its benefits. [Topic Leaders](#) (top three contributors in a point category) are recognized on stage at the annual SAP TechEds and the biggest contributors, known by their actions, expertise and helpfulness are sponsored as SAP Mentors, receiving free admission to SAP TechEd, and most importantly, mentor shirts. How can you increase your visibility? The first step is to maintain your user profile. The SCN user profile has been greatly improved, use it extensively so that it becomes your window to the community! Your user profile will provide other members valuable information about yourself, your content, the people and places you follow, and the reputation tab will be the place where you shine: badges, recent contribution points, top communities (based on lifetime points).

As you contribute to spaces in SCN, you accrue points in that space's category. The more quality content you contribute, the more you will be regarded as an expert in that category. And if you are among the top 5 contributors of your space, you will be listed as such on the space overview page.

So make the most of your engagement with others in SCN. In addition to getting answers from other experts, give back by contributing high quality / high quality to the rest of the Community. The SCN platform is social and you will be recognized for your actions. The best content is prominently featured on the site, you may be recognized formally as the "Member of the Month", or your peers may nominate you to become an SAP Mentor. Additionally, SCN Moderators are always on the lookout for subject matter experts with community spirit to join their ranks. Display those characteristics and you too may be nominated for the role!

We continue to explore in order to encourage contribution through interesting programs, rewards and recognition. One big project for the SCN Team is [gamification](#). SCN will use extensive game mechanics to encourage the right behaviors, allow members to know where they stand and what they have to do to get rewards, accrue their visibility and grow reputation in the community. Stay tuned for more information later this year!

16518 Views Tags: [scn](#), [program](#), [overview](#), [reputation](#), [points](#), [gamification](#), [active_contributor_badge](#)

Contributor Reputation Program FAQ

created by SAP User on 28-Nov-2011 21:37, last modified by Laure Cetin on 12-Sep-2012 21:03

in Share 2 0 0 7 1 Like 1

Version 21

What is the Contributor Reputation Program?

Your contributions are a vital part of the SAP Community Network. To reward our most active members, we've developed the Contributor Reputation Program, which awards points to community members for each document, code sample, video, wiki contribution, eLearning contribution, discussion post, and community topic weblog authored. The same awards go for creating rich media such as videos, podcasts or eLearning content. Points may also be awarded for other types of contributions, at the discretion of Community Managers and Moderators. You can see the [Build Your Reputation on SCN](#).

What is an Active Contributor?

As you participate and contribute on SCN, you will accumulate points over a 12-month rolling period that also counts toward lifetime points. Active Contributors are those members that are active enough on SCN to accumulate at least 250 points in the last 12 months. Active Contributors enjoy enhanced recognition on SCN with a badge that shows their current level of contribution: bronze, silver, gold or platinum.

What is a Topic Leader, and how does this differ from a Top Participant?

A Topic Leader is a member who is among the three leading contributors in a topic space on SCN, at the end of a 12-month contest period (ending in July each year). Topic Leaders receive additional recognition at events such as SAP TechEd conferences. For more information, read the [Former SCN "Top Contributors" now SCN "Topic Leaders"](#). A Top Participant is a leading contributor in specific topic spaces, based on contribution point totals accumulated within the last 12 months. A Top Participants widget in each topic space will feature and rank the 5 top contributors. Watch this widget, as it set to refresh daily.

How are points assigned on SCN?

In most cases, a fixed, base amount of points is automatically assigned to the author for each contribution such as an article, community topic blog or eLearning video. Community members also have the opportunity to award extra points for content they feel is high-quality and useful, with mechanisms such as "likes", "shares" and high ratings. In discussions, the original poster awards points to answers provided by the community. Space editors and moderators for areas such as wikis may also grant extra points for exceptional contributions.

How many points do I earn for my contributions?

Contribution	Points Awarded
--------------	----------------

Participant

A Topic Leader is a member who is among the three leading contributors in a topic space on SCN, at the end of a 12-month contest period (ending in July each year). Topic Leaders receive additional recognition at events such as SAP TechEd conferences. For more information, read the [Former SCN "Top Contributors" now SCN "Topic Leaders"](#). A Top Participant is a leading contributor in specific topic spaces, based on contribution point totals accumulated within the last 12 months. A Top Participants widget in each topic space will feature and rank the 5 top contributors. Watch this widget, as it set to refresh daily.

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How many points do I earn for my contributions?

Contribution	Points Awarded
Discussion posts	<p>Points assigned by the original poster of the thread, or by a Forum Moderator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">5 points - helpful answer (limit 15 times per thread)10 points - solved the problem (once per thread)
Community Topic Weblog / eLearning / Article authoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 pointsAdditional feedback points as the community likes, shares, or rates the content
Wiki contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">20 points - page publication2 points - page edit/update
Taking the annual SCN Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 points

Note that weblogs created in your own user profile (personal weblogs) do not earn any contribution nor feedback points. However, you can move your personal blogs to relevant topic spaces where they can start earning feedback points.

Point values may be modified at any time by SCN Management.

What are feedback points?

Feedback points are the easiest way for you to show approval and appreciation to the content author. When you give feedback using "Like," "Rate," and "Share," additional points are awarded to the author. This applies to content community content listed above (again, personal blogs are not eligible for feedback points).

My points have recently decreased, is this an error?

No, this is not an error. The points that show in the masthead, next to your name, are the points you accumulated in the last 12 months. Because you may get points every day, the amount of points may vary every day.

How do I know if a discussion thread has already been answered?

Threads marked as questions that remain unanswered are indicated by a question mark icon. These questions are still eligible for points.

Threads marked as questions and that have been marked as answered (and points awarded) are indicated by a check mark icon.

How do I award points in Discussions?

To award points in Discussion threads, you must first be the original poster of the question. To quickly find thread you created, go to your User Profile, and view Discussion threads in the Content tab. You will be able to click on either "Correct Answer" or "Helpful Answer" in each of the reply messages.

Correct Answer

10 points (limit one per thread)

Helpful Answer

5 points (limit 15 per thread)

How do I know my current status in the Contributor Reputation Program?

The Reputation Tab, in your User Profile, indicates your current contribution status. Other SCN members can also view your status and Reputation Tab.

The Reputation Tab allows you to see your lifetime points, your points earned over the last 12 months, and your current rank in the topic spaces in which you participate (based on lifetime points). You will also be able to see your Active Contributor status and badge based on the number of points you've earned in the last 12 months, and your last contributions.

The Active Contributor badges are awarded as follows:

Active Contributor Bronze: 250-499 points

Active Contributor Silver: 500-1,499 points

Active Contributor Gold: 1,500-2,499 points

Active Contributor Platinum: 2,500 points and above

Once you reach a higher contribution level, you will receive an email notification, in addition to seeing a new badge in your User Profile.

I have multiple user IDs on SCN, is it possible to consolidate my IDs and my points?

[April 23, 2012: We are currently experiencing issues with consolidating user IDs and contributions. Thank you for your patience]

Yes it is possible. You need to decide which user ID you want to keep, then send an email to

sapnetwork@sap.com, provide the user ID and ask for the consolidation to be done.

Your blog and discussion contributions will all be moved to your single user ID and the points will be consolidated. For the wiki, your points will be brought to your unique user ID but unfortunately, we don't have the ability to move your Wiki contributions to another user ID at this time.

Where can I find a list of top companies participating on SCN?

We provided a rank-list of companies participating on SCN in the past. A similar report will be provided later in 2012.


7410 Views

Average User Rating

★★★★★

(37 ratings)

Appendix 11: SCN Topic Leaders


Community Network

[Welcome, Guest](#)
[Login](#)
[Register](#)

[Solutions](#) >
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 [About SCN](#) >

[Industries](#) >
 [Training & Education](#) >
 [Partnership](#) >

[Lines of Business](#) >
 [University Alliances](#) >
 [Events & Webinars](#) >

[My Home](#) >
[Contributor Corner](#) >
[Contributor Corner](#) >
[SCN 2010-2011 Topic Leaders](#)

SCN 2010-2011 Topic Leaders

Added by Jason Cao, last edited by Anne-Katrin Hempel on Sep 12, 2011 ([view change](#))

Congratulations to our 2010-2011 (August 1, 2010 - July 31, 2011) Topic Leaders by points category!

Learn more about the SCN Contributor Recognition Program.

Questions? Read our [FAQ](#) page or enter your questions below and I will respond.

Topic/Points Category	Topic Leaders (with link to SCN Business Card)
ABAP Development	Vinod Kumar
ABAP Development	Brad Bohn
ABAP Development	Keshav.T
Business Information Warehouse	Srinivas
Business Information Warehouse	prashanthk
Business Information Warehouse	Surendra Kumar Reddy Koduru
Business Objects	Tammy Powlas
Business Objects	Ingo Hilgefort
Business Objects	Shawn Penner
Business One	GordonDu
Business One	RAHUL MOUNDEKAR
Business One	jimmy michael
Business Process Expert	nilanjan chatterjee
Business Process Expert	Norman Marks
Business Process Expert	Jim Daddario
Business Process Management	Rick Bakker
Business Process Management	Viji
Business Process Management	Rob Dielemans
Business Solutions	Pete Atkin
Business Solutions	Maheswaran.K
Business Solutions	Luke Marson
Business Standards	Gregory Misiorek
Business Standards	Andrew LeBlanc
Business Standards	Steve Winkler

Appendix 12: SAP Mentors Initiative

SAP Mentors

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OverviewContentPeopleSubspaces

Overview

SAP Mentors [FAQ](#)
List of SAP Mentors A-J
List of SAP Mentors K-Z
Join the Twitter Conversation
 [Mentor Monday Public Webinars](#)

Meet the SAP Mentors!

- Trust + Results = Success
- Advocating for Excellence
- The Tree of Talent
- The Inside Track on Community Engagement
- All for One and HANA for All
- Tales of Two Inside Tracks, SAP Mentor style

SAP Mentors in Action: Karin Tillotson

Top Participants

	Mark Finnm	319
	Matthias Steiner	163
	Owen Pettiford	146
	Tim Guest	117
	Tammy Powlas	109

[View More](#)
[Learn about the reputation program](#)

Go to: Discussions (Forum) | Blog Posts | Documents (Articles/eLearning)

Featured Content

The Power of Mentors- By Greg Myers

Recent SAP Mentor SCN Blog Posts

Content tagged with **sapmentor**

World Premiere of BusinessObjects Design Studio: #ASUG Webcast
1 hour ago in SAP BusinessObjects Design Studio
by Tammy Powlas

The Way of the Developer
1 hour ago in SAP TechEd
by Matthias Steiner

Using Web Intelligence REST Web Services SDK to retrieve information about reports (JavaScript and C#)
14 hours ago in BI Platform
by Brian Park

Old habits die hard...(aka making change stick)
17 hours ago in SAP Training and Education
by Kerry Brown

SAP InnoJam - Not just for Techies!
1 day ago in SAP InnoJam
by Tim Guest

Recent Activity

SAP NetWeaver BPM/PO or SAP Business Workflow - Which one to use ?

Astrid Gambill commented
Hi Owen Thanks for the helpful info, I concur with Jocelyn above, that the formatting needs some adjustment - the Comments column is missing words on the right hand side. Do you have any advice...
19 hours ago
in SAP Mentors - 5 comments

Need a New User Interface (UI) or User Experience (UX) instead of SAPGUI ? Read on to find out what you need to use (Part 1)

Andreas Kunz commented (in response to Chris P)
Disclaimer: being involved with UI5 development, I am probably biased :-). Hi Chris, I do fully agree that UI5 is a JavaScript library providing UI elements, putting an emphasis on OData...
1 day ago
in SAP Mentors - 17 comments

New User Interface (UI) or User Experience (UX) for SAPGUI ? The Business Case (Part 3)

Owen Pettiford wrote
In part 1 and part 2 of this blog series I talked about the the options that SAP customers have to renovate (replace) SAPGUI if they want to use SAP tools to do this. One comment on the first blog...
3 days ago
in SAP Mentors - 0 comments

Actions

- Start a discussion
- Write a document
- Write a blog post
- Receive email notifications
- Track in Communications
- View feeds

Read the Rules of Engagement.

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SAP HANA One: SAP HANA Platform Available in Public Cloud

Learn More

Unanswered Questions

- Re: Sap Module
- Re: Need Advice for certification
- Re: The TechEd 2012 Madrid Thread
- Will you share your knowledge with aspiring students?

Popular Tags

[active_contributor_badge](#)
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[mentors_quarterly](#)
[new_scn](#)
[orchestration](#)
[overview](#)
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[sapmentor](#)
[scn](#)
[social_media](#)
[welcome](#)

View all

- 235 -



SAP Mentors & SAP co-founder, Prof. Dr. h.c. Hasso Plattner, at TechEd conference

SAP Mentor Alumni









Tools ▾

38 Added by Mark Finnern, last edited by Mark Finnern on Oct 11, 2012 (view change)

List of Alumni SAP Mentors

The saying goes: Life is happening while you are making other plans. Many SAP Mentors' lives takes them away from being as active as they were before in the larger SAP community. Triggered by a blog post of Dennis Howlett: [Making the case for SAP Mentor alumni program.](#), we created one. Blag likes to point out: Once an SAP Mentor always an SAP Mentor. This SAP Mentor Alumni program is a way for a graceful exit, but still staying in contact with SAP. We miss them.

Exit Year: 2012

Picture	Name, with profile page link	Company	Country	Area of Expertise/Line of Business	Industry Expertise	SAP Mentor from/to
	Anne Kathrine Petterøe	Pearl Consulting AS	Norway	Certified Adobe Intelligent Platform Consultant (LiveCycle 7 and ES). Certified SAP NetWeaver Development Consultant.		
	Butch McNally	Eastman	USA	ASUG Portals Communities Facilitator		
	Christian Guenther	REALTECH Consulting GmbH	Germany	SOA and NetWeaver Architecture and strategic consulting		
	Dan McWeeney	Adobe systems	USA			
	Detlev Beutner	Systemlösungen Beutner	Germany	Consultant SAP NetWeaver		
	Ed Herrmann	Colgate-Palmolive	USA	ABAP, BSP, RIA, OOAD, WD4A		
	Ginger Gatlin	SAP	USA	Solution management group for Enterprise Information Management		
	Ken Hartman	Hughes Network Systems	USA	BI evangelist		



Current and Alumni SAP Mentors with SAP's co-founder and two co-CEOs

Appendix 13: SAP Community Network Activity

Build More Connections with SAP Community Network Version 10

created by [Palm Norchoovech](#)  on 22-Feb-2012 07:21, last modified by [Sylvana Chang](#) on 12-Nov-2012 19:10

 Share  +1  Tweet  Like

Let me explain some ways to build invaluable connections that will help you be more successful in your SAP career using the NEW SAP Community Network.

Start with a robust profile of your own that includes all the topics and characteristics you want people to know about you.

- Make sure bio tells your story
- Follow content and places that you want to use to find other like minded members.

Now it's time to make the NEW SAP Community Network work for you!

- You can see who else is following the content and places you follow and connect to them.
- You can activate actions of receive email communications or track in communications to find out when someone posts on this content or place.
- You will start to notice common bloggers in your area of interest. Take a leap and leave a comment on what you think of their conclusions. We are all learning so feel free to let them know if you agree, disagree or think that another point should be added-let the conversation continue in the comments. They will respect you for having an opinion. The same is true for discussions.
- The next step is to blog or start a discussion yourself. Make sure you tag it so it is brought to the attention of followers of the space you want to attract. They will then connect with you.

Remember, real connections are built when you start engaging. Welcome!

5032 Views

 Tags: [getting_started](#), [new_scn](#), [community](#), [welcome](#), [overview](#), [reputation](#), [active_contributor_badge](#), [learning](#), [how_to](#)



Architecture Alternatives for Transactional HANA Applications - An Overview

Posted by Thorsten Franz in SAP HANA Developer Center on 25-Oct-2012 14:06:43

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Few technological areas are as rapidly changing as HANA, where the momentum originates not only from the evolving platform itself, but also from neighboring components such as the ABAP application server as their integration with HANA improves and new options arise. With SAP TechEd 2012 Las Vegas just behind us and HANA positioning itself more and more as a platform that is suited not purely for analytical applications but also for transactional apps, it is time to take a pulse check and get an overview of the different architectures currently available for such applications.

1. AS ABAP with HANA Side-by-side

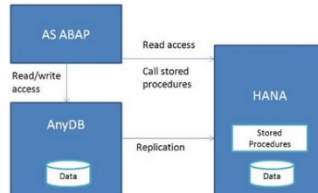
This is a classic architecture that has been around since the first days of HANA. Depending on your ABAP release, the integration is more or less comfortable and well-supported by an unbroken tool chain.

In this scenario, your ABAP server still uses its classical database as its primary persistence, but it is also connected to a HANA database which serves as its secondary persistence. It uses a replication service (usually SAP Landscape Transformation) to replicate a subset of the application tables into HANA's column store.

While most write and read database operations will be against the classical system database, a careful selection of queries will be against the mirror tables in the remote HANA database. These will be queries that are performed immensely faster in HANA, such as calculations involving large numbers of records.

Depending on the ABAP release (AS ABAP >= 7.0 with Kernel 7.20, AS ABAP 7.40), accessing the HANA remote (often but not necessarily mirror tables) will be more or less difficult and/or different from accessing local tables.

Previously existing (>= 7.0) features to access HANA via a secondary database connection:



[break]

Conclusion

Architect for the future and for rapidly changing boundary conditions. You can achieve this by architecting clearly, anticipating refactoring, investing early into preventing architectural decay, and separating concerns well (collapsing the layers or not).

I recommend that you stay in touch with the HANA and general SAP community to be informed about new and changing options and to keep reducing TCO for your custom-built HANA-based solutions as new options become available.

Finally, when you build or refactor your own applications on top of HANA and gain expert knowledge in the process, share your expertise with the community. It's a win-win situation - you can recognition and everybody else learns from you. The Force is strong in you.

SAP TechEd Las Vegas 2012 sessions

- CD100 – SAP HANA – Application Services
- CD162 – Accelerating ABAP Applications Using the Best Features in SAP HANA
- CD163 – SAP HANA – Application Services Hands-On
- CD202 – ABAP for SAP HANA: Building Business Applications Optimized for In-Memory
- TEC105 – SAP HANA Database for SAP Business Suite
- TEC106 – SAP NetWeaver AS ABAP for SAP HANA – The Future of the ABAP Platform

Products: SAP Business Suite, SAP HANA, SAP NetWeaver Topics: ABAP, In-Memory Business Data Management, Landscape Design and Architecture

1436 Views

Tags: sapmentors, netweaver, hana, sap_netweaver_platform, abap, erp, sap_developer_network, in_memory, hana_developer_center, sap_hana, saphana, hana_abap, hana_developer_center, inmemorydevcenter, accelerators, oltp, transactional

Average User Rating
★★★★★
(7 ratings)

My Rating:
★★★★★

Share 8 +1 3 Tweet 23 Like 17

7 Comments

Add a comment



Michael Koch 25-Oct-2012 14:43

Hi Thorsten

Thank you for this great and insightful blog post. Your last section on extensibility is the real crunch point in my view, because that's where from an enterprise perspective the real benefit lies: stable core processes, allowing easy future upgrades, yet still customisable. As you point out, ABAP on HANA has the edge in this respect.

With ERP for HANA on the horizon, there will be a lot of time spent on making past custom changes work in this new column-based database world. If customers disregard this point and simply run their ERP "as-is", then they will never reap all the HANA benefits. It will be interesting to see how ERP for HANA will deal with existing enhancements and what kind of enhancement framework integration we will see (maybe with the existing, tried-and-tested Enhancement Framework?). The amount of consulting work to be done in this area will have a big impact on buying decisions for HANA.

The near future is looking very exciting and promising indeed!

Thanks again for this!

M

Like (2) Report Abuse Reply



Thorsten Franz 25-Oct-2012 15:30 (in response to Michael Koch)

Michael,
Thanks for your feedback, and I agree completely.

- In my view, the
- architectural approaches,
- programming model, and
- tool support

for handling existing and future enhancements to handle a coexistence or smooth succession of non-HANA and HANA deployments of the same business software are perhaps the biggest challenge for the adoption of HANA. This is something I'm focusing on and I'll continue to collaborate with SAP on this topic to bring in the customer and ISV perspective... just like you always bring in the consultant perspective. ☺

Cheers,
Thorsten

Like (0) Report Abuse Reply

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6

6

Actions

Report abuse

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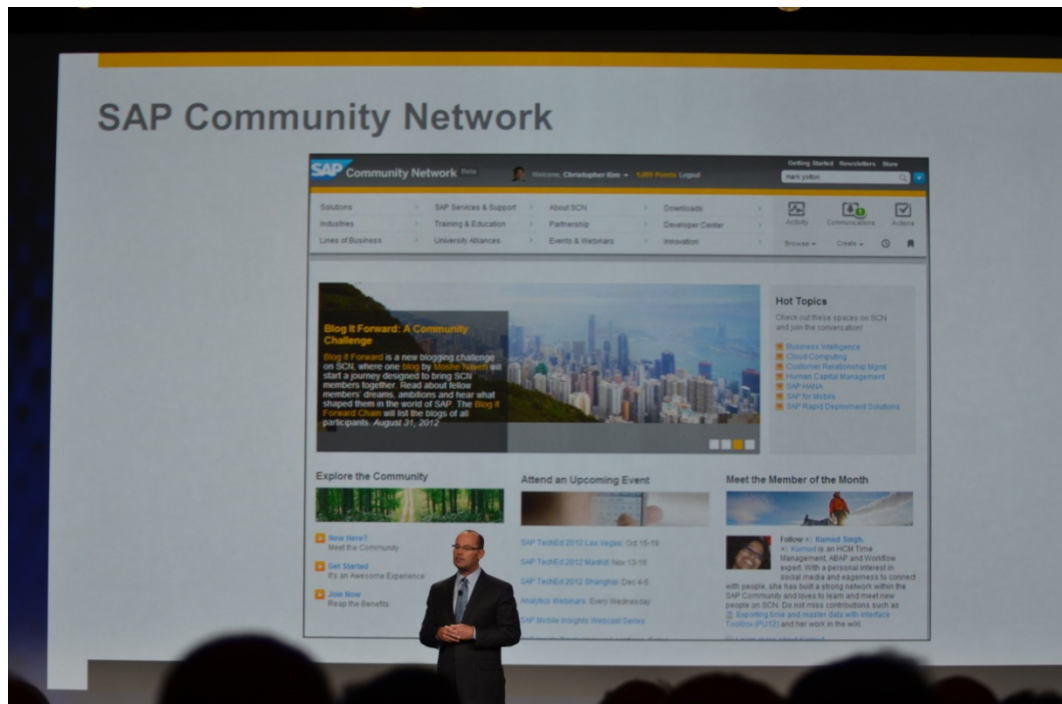
Track in Communications

SAP TECHED

SAP TechEd 2012 Sessions

Explore over 1,000 hours of educational content by track, sub-track, products and hot topics. View sessions for Las Vegas, Madrid and Bangalore.

Appendix 14: SAP TechEd, CodeJam, & DemoJam





SAP CodeJam Stuttgart

Posted by [Craig Cmehill](#) in [SAP CodeJam](#) on 20-Jun-2012 09:05:49

Share



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Tweet 0



Like 0

Very recently leadership at SAP has continued to express the desire to put our developers together with those of our partners and customers as we did in the beginning 40 years ago and get back to our roots of innovation! Taking a further step in that direction we've decided it's time to rekindle the infamous Hacker Night from years past into a whole new format called the CodeJam! So bring your laptop and come join your fellow developers — it's time to code, hack and create!



CodeJam Stuttgart is just around the corner and that means you need to [SIGN UP](#) and reserve your spot as soon as possible! Our friends over at BridgingIT GmbH have not only offered us their space but also their rooftop grill for this free event! Signup and we'll shoot all of you an email with a [checklist](#) you'll need to take a look at before hand but other wise you just need to show up with your laptop and desire to enter the world of [SAP Mobile](#).

August 17, 2012 starting at 13:00 pm

BridgingIT GmbH
Königstraße 42
70173 Stuttgart
Germany

Remember seating is very limited during this concept phase so be sure to [SIGN UP](#) quickly!



6 More Chances to take part in 2012!

Posted by [Craig Cmehill](#) in [SAP CodeJam](#) on 30-Oct-2012 09:35:48

Share



+1 0



Like 0

It's the 4th quarter and it's been an awesome ride so far! I've talked about these events a few times this year, when I first proposed them and got approval I figured we'd get a few in and eventually they would grow but I am amazed at how fast they have grown!

- [Berlin](#)
- [London](#)
- [Tel Aviv](#)
- [Huizen](#)
- [Newtown Square](#)
- [Stuttgart](#)
- [Istanbul](#)
- [Madrid](#)

The last event I did was in Madrid, where we focused on HANA and an interesting time sharing a single AWS instance of HANA amongst the attendees! It got a bit slow at times but in the end it was a great event and everyone left with a better idea of how HANA worked and how to get started and of course how to easily setup their own free developer licenses and the general costs that at least I pay with my AWS instances. Now with the latest event in Madrid over we've 6 more ready for this year!

- [Sofia](#)
- [Bratislava](#)
- [Skopje](#)
- [Bangalore](#)
- [Montreal](#)
- [Buenos Aires](#)

What's even cooler is the fact that the "moderator" roles have expanded and now I've been joined by a few others helping to run these events all over the world. The bad news is that I'll personally miss out on some events but the great news is that with more events means more people will be able to take the opportunity to join and get their hands on free software, free licenses and of course free food. It's an exciting time to get your hands into the development world of SAP so take the chance and join us at one of our next events! We've already begun planning into 2013!!

- Bielefeld - Jan 11th
- Stuttgart - Feb 22nd

201 Views

Tags: [sap](#), [community](#), [development](#), [developer](#), [event](#), [coding](#), [developers](#), [codejam](#), [develop](#), [developer_experience](#), [sapcodejam](#), [developer_program](#)



Appendix 15: Certification "Cert5" Initiative



"If I have seen farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants. - Sir Isaac Newton

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